

Horizon

REVIEW OF LITERATURE & ART

Thomas Driberg

William Empson

R. Ironside

Cecil Day Lewis

Gully Mason

J. Maclaryn-Ross

J. B. Priestley

W. R. Rodgers

Reviews by

Desmond Hawkins

and

George Orwell

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JUNE VOL. 1, No. 6 1940

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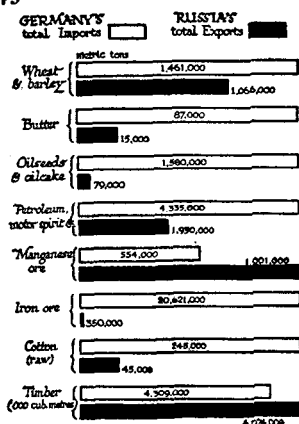
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HORIZON

EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

Vol. 1. No. 6. June 1940

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

DEAR SIR,

As a professional writer, I have been uncommonly interested in the great controversy on Boys' Weeklies, but both Orwell and Richards miss a main point. Current in Fleet Street there is a very simple and credible explanation of why *The Magnet* and *The Gem* give such a scant reflection of the modern world and seem scarcely to have changed in thirty years. It is due, it would seem, neither to the vile machinations (? casual control) of a Tory millionaire on the one hand nor the alleged out-datedness of Mr. Richards on the other. It is merely that, so editorial gossips tell me, *The Magnet* and *The Gem* stories regularly revolve in an eight-year cycle. Every eight years, so they say, the old stories are touched-up and painted over, to appear again with fresh gloss and entertain a new generation of boys.

I have not the time necessary for research to confirm this. Mr. Orwell has obviously missed it, but what does Mr. Richards say?

If the stories are recurrent, much is explained. It fully shows why they smack of 1910, clears up Mr. Richards's otherwise inexplicable literary output, and puts boyhood on its proper level of timelessness.

Besides, I much prefer the picture of Mr. Richards touching up his past work to the awful ordeal of an author condemned to inventing new Greyfriarsiana every week for life.

Yours sincerely,

HAROLD A. ALBERT

In reply, Mr. Richards writes:

Mr. Harold A. Albert tells us that he is a professional writer, on gossiping terms with editors who in their gossipy moments appear to have been pulling his leg to a considerable extent. I prefer to take this charitable view rather than to believe that Mr. Harold A. Albert is an unsuccessful scribe whose way to the editorial sanctum is barred by some inexorable Cerberus, and who, consequently, like so many other disappointed Peris at the gate of Paradise, allows his judgment of those within the magic portals to be clouded by his irritation. In either case, Mr. Harold A. Albert is talking nonsense.

Mr. Harold A. Albert states that it is 'current in Fleet Street' that *The Magnet* revolves in an eight-year cycle, and that at these regular intervals old *Magnet* stories are touched up and reprinted; which, says Mr. Harold A. Albert, explains 'why *The Magnet* gives such a scant reflection of the modern world'—an utterly unfounded statement, by the way. Mr. Harold A. Albert must have provided himself with an Ear of Dionysius, seventy-seven times amplified, to hear even a whisper of such gossip in Fleet Street. He tells us

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that he has had no time to confirm this. Mr. Harold A. Albert's time no doubt is extremely valuable, but a few precious moments should have been sacrificed to confirming such a statement before chucking it at the public. It would have been easy to examine an old file of *Magnets*, which would have led Mr. Harold A. Albert to the startling discovery that every *Magnet*, from the first issue, has contained a new and original story. The same characters, certainly, appear each time, but the plots are infinitely varied, many of them connected with current events that could not possibly serve a second or third time. And—though I do not expect Mr. Harold A. Albert to understand it—*The Magnet* gives a faithful reflection of life at the very hour of printing. *The Magnet* author knows his business so well, that every number is right up to date, the fact that the characters have been before the public for thirty years making no difference whatever to this.

There were strikes, slumps, unemployment, Socialism and Communism, and other blunders and imbecilities, before 1910, and Frank Richards left them alone then, as he leaves them alone now, because they are not proper subjects for healthy young people to contemplate. The Human Boy is Frank Richards's subject, and except for 'light externals', the Human Boy has not changed since Tom Brown went to school. Frank Richards keeps a careful eye on those light externals; for the rest, he is content with human nature, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Frank Richards will write of Socialistic schoolboys, or Communistic schoolboys, or schoolboys deeply concerned with the influence of blue in the arts, when he finds such schoolboys in actual existence. So far, he has never had the misfortune to encounter any such young asses.

MUSIC REVIEW

We must apologise to the publishers of *Music Review*, which was noticed in our May issue. The price of this review is 4s. per copy, and not 1s. as stated in that notice.

'L' OCA DEL CAIRO'

The first performance in England of Mozart's opera will take place at the Sadler's Wells Theatre on Thursday, May 30th, at 8.30 p.m., and on Saturday, June 1st, at 2.30 and 8.30 p.m. The musical adaptation is by Dr. H. F. Redlich. The performance is in aid of the County of London and the County of Middlesex British Red Cross Society.

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'WRITING FOR THE PRESS'

THIS publication should be in the hands of all who are considering the possibilities of writing short articles or stories. It contains much useful information on this subject—some of its chief contributors being well-known editors and journalists who are, of course, qualified by their experience and knowledge to speak with authority. They give many valuable hints to the new writer and show how wide is the field of opportunity which awaits the newcomer into the literary sphere.

A large part of 'Writing for the Press' is devoted to a description of the work of the London School of Journalism, which was founded in 1919 at the instance of the late Lord Northcliffe. It is the only School of its kind which enjoys the patronage of great newspaper proprietors and editors, and has won a unique reputation as an attractive centre of instruction in story and article writing. Its range of subjects (taught by correspondence) include:

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COMMENT

SIX numbers of *Horizon* have now appeared. Six more may reasonably expect to see the light; let us consider, at this half-way house, how our policy is shaping. It is a literary policy, and nothing more, and therefore meets with opposition from the non-literary, and unsleeping criticism from those within the ranks. Mr. Priestley, for example, says we have too much poetry; it is no longer, he claims, a cultural export, and should be treated as a literary by-product. In fact, we are inundated with poems, not only by professional poets, or even amateur ones, but in many cases by people who have never written a poem before, and yet find it come to them as naturally as blowing out a paper bag. Poems arrive on regimental notepaper, or on the shoddy white foolscap (used only in communicating with their equals!) of our suave bureaucracy. We have had poems sent from schools and prisons, and even from large country houses. From these amateur poets we can learn one important fact. Poetry is still the natural national form of self-expression, the one to which we take most readily. It is neither artificial nor decadent, and as the volume of poetry written would appear to have increased since the war, so the likelihood of great poetry being written in this country—which possesses the language and the emotional reserves necessary for it—must increase, particularly when it is taken into account that the poetry of to-day is classless and is no longer the preserve of the educated and leisured. From the professional poets another fact can be learned; that a fascinating struggle is going on between the technicians (the 'poets' poets', the 'avant garde') and the traditionalists. It is a struggle rather between technique and imagination, and *Horizon* has tried to give expression to both. Thus, in this number, we have a long poem by William Rodgers, an Ulsterman of thirty, which is dependent entirely on its technique, its inner rhymes, dry assonances, practical images, all, of course, in their turn proceeding from the solid thought

which binds the long poem together. Translate this poem into a painting of *Bank Holiday* and it would approximate to Seurat's *Grande Jatte* or to the art of Coldstream. Not that it is a work of social realism, but that it is a detached and coldly philosophical observation on the way in which we spend our leisure, and the forces which impel us to it. Empson's poem in No. 5 was another technical achievement. Words unblushingly prosaic were strung together by the poet's sense of harmony and discipline into a lyric which produces on the sensitive reader an impression of deep nostalgia, of extraordinary relief from pain. Such poems as these extend the bounds and possibilities of English poetry, and reclaim themes and words and images for it as the Dutch reclaim the unpromising Zuyder Zee. Brian Howard's poem in the last number combines technical skill with a penetrating cry of grief. Dylan Thomas's poem, on the other hand, is governed by a kind of wild bleak inspiration. Technique and imagination are perhaps false distinctions: all one can say is that in some poems, and they are the most interesting, technique has worked over imagination to the extent of almost causing it to disappear. The direct emotion which the poet feels is like the clay figure which the sculptor models—a mould is taken of it and recast in bronze, the original material is thrown away.

The two poems by Prokosch which *Horizon* has printed are examples of romantic poetry. They are packed with strong feeling and do not achieve their effects by technique. The two poems by Auden are didactic. The technique is clumsy, and the versification careless, but the thought, the argument, is deeply poetical, although lumps of the raw material of his poetry are too often left in. Betjeman's 'Upper Lambourne' was, however, entirely traditional, a Georgian poem in which the nostalgia and imagery had been brought most subtly up to date. Thus we begin to recognize the new directions in which modern poetry is going, and can distinguish certain extremes. The pure technical virtuosity of Empson's poem comes at one end, with Rodgers's rather near to it; the lyrical rhetoric of Prokosch or Brian Howard

in the middle, together with Auden's profound and didactic poetry, or Eliot's 'East Coker' (where polished technical passages are succeeded by more awkward emotional ones), and at the other extreme the great bulk of ordinary artless, thoughtless English verse. Dylan Thomas and some of his Celtic imitators are unclassifiable; he resembles a kind of mad hit-or-miss experimental scientist who may at any moment either split the atom or produce from his laboratory a few test-tubes fizzing with coloured water.

In *Horizon* No. 4 we published six young and little-known poets. Laurie Lee (who was earning his living by playing the violin through the streets and cafés of Spain when the Spanish war broke out) contributed a direct emotional experience, 'A Moment of War', Adam Drinan's 'The Gulls' represents the didactic trend, and L. S. Little and Nicolas Moore incline towards Dylan Thomas's technique. Terence Heywood's 'Bestiary' was dry and satirical; like Rodgers and Empson, he would seem a poet less of the heart than of the head, while the Reverend F. Buchanan has the approach of Hopkins or the religious Eliot. In short, the poetry which *Horizon* has printed is an inexhaustible subject; there is still much that could be said about Barker's attempt to revive the Elegy in his 'Austrian Requiem', about Day Lewis's delicate handling of traditional material in his translations of the Georgics into a colloquial, yet rarefied and poetical English. We are in a nest of singing birds, and for all we know any mail may bring the first notes of a new Milton into the office. Mr. Priestley is quite wrong, English poetry was never more interesting or thriving; for even if the Milton does not appear, there is much excellent work being done by serious young poets with a sense of vocation.

And Faith beats down the enemy's last gate,
But listless then within resistless halls
Dies of its enemy's death.

Such poetry—thoughtful, crisp, hard to detach from its context, and coming from a poem which is in itself one

of the most extraordinary statements of the principle of dialectic materialism (thesis, antithesis, synthesis) to be made in verse—gives one new hope for the future of literature in England, and *Horizon* is fortunate in being able to print it.

It is a secret of good writing that it takes up very little room and expands in the remembering. The paper shortage, which will rid us of the books not worth publishing and the news not worth printing, may bring publisher and reader back to poetry, which is now the only kind of writing so concentrated as to be economically justified.

In prose we have gone out for the short story, the critical essay, and, where we can find it, the imaginative writing which was once known as the prose poem. Here again a new trend is noticeable, that is to say a return towards fine writing, towards a use of all the rich vocabulary of literary English, and the prose of the imagination. This is reinforced by the strange phenomenon of the Welsh renaissance, for prose is being affected by the Celtic rhetoric of the Welsh writers. We have printed stories by Rhys Davies, Pritchett, and G. F. Green which illustrate this kind of writing, and this month, in contrast, we publish a story by an unknown writer, which is not only an excellent comedy (and those who find no comedy in a satire on English justice should remember how tolerantly the Americans have accepted in Faulkner or Dreiser criticism of a similar nature), but also an attempt, like that made by Hemingway, to write entirely in a spoken vernacular. The attempt succeeds, because the quality of the material (India) is so rich and exotic that it can stand the economy of the treatment. The two hundred and fifty word vocabulary of Adams is enriched by his background, just as the vernacular of American gangsters is adequate as long as violence and action inform it. Where the colloquial writers break down is in the attempt to describe ordinary life, a Lyons' Corner House, for instance, in the words of the Tough Guy. The next stories to be published are two, by Elizabeth Bowen and Julia Strachey, which are 'literary', and another, in demotic American, by Alfred Perlès.

In regard to critical essays, we have attempted to get the best we can, excluding those which are too academic, or which are not coloured by a real passion for the subject. Clement Greenberg's article was reprinted from *Partisan Review*, and is an example of American criticism, just as Jouve's *Mozart* was of French. Orwell's 'Boys' Weeklies' was a *tour de force*, Quennell's 'Romantic Catastrophe' was no less revolutionary, and R. Ironside's 'Burne-Jones and Moreau' carries under its learning the implication that English art is at its best when literary and imaginative, and has perhaps been ruined by contact with the French. Such articles, careful, passionate, and unsettling are what a Review exists to produce.

In the political articles, we have endeavoured to present various points of view; as the war increases in intensity, so the efficacy of political articles decreases. There seems no point in advocating political theories which no one is in a position to implement, and so the space is better given to creative writing, and to those articles which bring closer the culture of France and America. For there can be no doubt that the war (crippling though it be to the artist who is affected economically, or by conscription) is yet causing a deepening interest in art and the artist by which they may later profit. An English renaissance may be on its way, and triumph with an English victory: for it is possible that the war, with the upheaval it has caused in English life, may finally destroy those class barriers which segregate the talents of the few from the potentialities of the many. *New Writing* (Hogarth Press, 5/-) has just come out, and in it writers of the calibre of Henry Green and Rosamond Lehman are fellow travellers with Indians and Chinese.

This number of *Horizon* also reflects a changing England: the young coalminer is an old Etonian, the short story writer is on the dole. In their fate is bound up that of the embryo new democracy which may bring humanity, opportunity, and a flowering of the arts to our stuffy island, and to the whole of Europe, or which may be deformed by reaction and suffocated by defeat.

W. R. RODGERS

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

New every morning now the clerk docks off
Yesterday's desk-date, jerks back the needle
On duty's disc, and noses and slides on
Round the ingrowing ring and exact track
Of old tactics till the day's contracting
Circle ends, and suddenly the idle needle
Skids wildly into zig-zag freedom
And tidy tailspin, the clerk knocks off
Abruptly, buttoning-up his coat.

And later, no doubt, you will see him
Nosing and sliding in orderly line
Into pin-lighted cinema, being led
Alertly to allotted seat of ease,
Relaxing with eyes like asterisks;
Or note him standing in stadium rind,
Eager for joy to be unconfined, the
Electric hare let loose to recapture
Its first fine careless rapture.

Even here at the day's convenient halt
And within its convolvulus ring
He has his own hugged track, his strangling string
Of ingrained act, his railed and ready ease;
And coiled in this roundabout and tail-chase
Of private scope and escape is ever
The spin of flesh on the spindle of bone
Concentering all, with its brute ambitions,
Its acute and terrible attritions.

But few look up to see or consider
This, the slack and screw of their happiness,

The economic claw, the heart's own flaw,
The ambient of mixed routine and rout;
Few look, except to the standing desk-date
(their only shoremark) that notes and notches
Time's indivisibly-flowing miles,
That recognizes the returning tide,
That remembers the arriving traveller.

New every morning through a thousand streets
Life siphons into offices, and worms
Into old workings: yet the entombed man
Waiting behind the walled weeks hears always
The deliberate taps of time loudening
And the rescuing days drawing nearer,
Till at last rock opens and the gloom
Breaks like a bomb about him—holiday hands
Beckon him from far lands, urge his escape.

So out of pent city and inland pit
They nose and slide by easy rut and rail
To distant sea-edge, spreading boldly
On sand-dunes, or lolling on piers
(the leash-ends of land),
Or, in pairs, pacing slowly, posing as idlers
Till the last hill hides
Them, and they hurry deliberately
On to the Land's End and hilt's halt of heart's desire.

Longing to skip over the edge of scope
They look out all day at the far islands,
Or scan with glass the slipping distances
To where, bold in some enormous valley,
Walled and bottomed by the swinging water,
The cormorant squats: or between tide-lines
They march for miles searching for shells, leaping
Back when the swan-neck wave pours down and
pounds
Out to yellow hissing beaks at their feet.

Here in these strange places no memory
Arrests and edits the running reel
Of their eager extravagant acts, fear
Lays no detaining or determining hand
On them, the backward light of precedent
No longer faces them with dutiful shadows
— Frolicking lives that at a finger's touch
Will curl like worms into a stiff conceit
And dead front of frightened consciousness.

Along the valley roads some roll in cars,
Looking for life on sky-lines, or in bars,
Mustered in bus on mystery trip they cheer
As the chartered miles gape before them
And zip obediently behind them,
Their fixed stare clattering like a stick
Across the sliding face and fence of fields
To the full stop, where they interrogate
The great man's birthplace, or the rebel's grave.

Through bright gaps these sudden strangers snapshot
The slipshod landscape, and depart content.
But, coming home in the bare evening,
Memory on the mind's horizon edge
Like lightning prickles and flashes, and Care
Like caterpillar in curled leaf shrinks the heart;
For still the thread and threat of memory
Runs through these strange places and faces and
Jerks back the jumping beads of time and space.

And still from frugal bungalow and fig-leaf tent
The stockbroker, the stonebreaker, and the candle-
stick-maker
Trot into shop for morning newspaper,
Afraid to let the world go by without
Accommodating eye, anxious to acquaint
And equate their happiness with all
Unbalancing happenings, helplessly

Eager to follow the involving game
Of territorial noughts and crosses.

And still each night from alp and valley lap,
From all dividing individual aims
Life spokes into the town's sociable hub;
Where, under confetti-freckle of lights,
The girls in banana-bright bandanas
Parade down prickly lanes and lines of eyes;
Others round fun-stand wait the rocket-flash
Of wit on upturned faces, or applaud
The seal-like vocalist balancing one last note on voice-
tip.

Far out on the wavering water they see
The pointed ship probe on to express end,
While they freely to-night at the slack edge
Of the vehement sea of affairs sit
And saunter; soon all must enter
That stiff and teeming centre, to-morrow
Each homing heart released by time-table
Springs dove-like back to office ark and task, gives
One last elastic look and snaps away.

Away from outer rout to inner rut
And ironed route; away from the wild
And unwalled waste of wish, the zig-zag tracks,
The wilful freaks and fractures of habit,
The staccato acts of insurrection,
The guilty bed, the naked bathe, the night
Annexed from niggard eyes by drunkenness,
The lonely climb at dawn, all the jerky
Gap-toothed gamut of places and spaces.

Away from these eccentric ends to the city's
Centripetal calm and planetary core
Of custom and corporate act, away
To private lawns and privet lanes
With pilot curbs and polite drains,

Day's slick pay-lines, night's slack play-pens
Where we are ticketed and trickled into
Stalls, and turnstiled into galleries and grades
And apt groups, like pebbles that elbow and
Rub shiny shoulders on a narrow beach.

— Thus on the round and turning stage of flesh
We present to you the usual act,
Rut and Rout, alias Butt and Rebut,
Alias Leash and Release, the magpie pair
In their bitter backbiting ball-bouncing
And reciprocating patter. No doubt
You have seen it before, for it is
The same yesterday, to-day and forever,
Showing at all houses and theatres,
The skeleton of all our furbished plays.

For not by gradual stealthy steps do we
Move onwards to a plotted destiny,
But between antinomies we are stretched
And pent, and catapulted to new ends
And angry issues. Note, now, how in us
Each thing resists and buoys its opposite,
Goodness is foreskinned and frisked by Evil,
And Violence advances Reason's forces,
Cruelty recruits Kindness, and titan
Dictators tickle tom-tit democrats.

And Faith beats down the enemy's last gate,
But listless then within resistless halls
Dies of its enemy's death: thus do you see
The saw-toothed graph drawn daily, inking
The in-and-out of action, linking rut and rout;
But few look up to know, few seek to master
These see-saw forces until disaster
Breaks the pithless sticks of apathy, and then
Through gaps of anger heady droves will hurry
And into panic-traps hot hooves will huddle.

And what will be left of us then but our faces
In albums, our names on war's memorials,
Our number on old disc picked up by peasant?
History's putty shapes, pitied or praised
According to public mode or private mood,
We have done it ourselves and need expect
No less, for the music goes round and round
In the old rings, new every morning,
The spin of flesh on the spindle of bone
Concentering all, with its brute ambitions,
Its acute and terrible attritions.

THOMAS DRIBERG

PARTY LINE

Reassembling on the border
We realise in reassembly.

Coming out of the dream, it is clear now
Clear to us again
Clear that there is a border.

See the dotted line. On the Ordnance Survey
It turns to and fro. A loop of it,
Red for the next county, misled us.

No dotted line to sign, but clean continuous
And, to convince, bending to be
A hair-spring, tautening to needle.

The ranks reassemble on the borderline.

GULLY MASON

THE MINE

LIFE is complex on the surface of the earth. Man travels in the shadows to escape the splendour of life. He smears his eyes with hatred, blinding himself to the beauty he fears to worship.

But, in the mine, there is neither night nor day. Here, in the secret places of the earth, I can shelter from the winds that whirl me to destruction.

Around me in these tunnels a hundred men are busy at their sacrilegious task. Daily they enter the anus of the earth to win the stones of darkness from the shadow of death. They are thieves, picking at the excrement of a thousand ages. Kneeling against the gleaming coal face, pick in hand, and faces glistening in the yellow light, they work like cracksmen at a safe.

Sometimes the earth, indifferent to their impudence, lets death slip from the walls of her belly. She performed this casual act on March 26th, when Norman Robinson, my next-door neighbour, was killed in the Walldridge seam.

But we went down the pits next day, just the same, to hack another five feet into the earth. Every day we hack five feet further to somewhere, and twelve hours out of our lives. And next day the coal face is still there, promising as little as our lives.

Yet the adventure is unchanged. The next blow of the pick may break the barrier, and we, the men of darkness, will burst into a rich and sacred cavern. Men cannot say for certain that no such place exists. In the lonely silence of the mine, fantasy and reality are close together.

That is why I hack so savagely at the seam, hewing and wrenching at the earth's privacy. The other miners, I think, have no vision of the cavern. They battle with the earth,

hating the conflict without promise of victory; so that they seek fulfilment in the wars men arrange on the surface.

I am nineteen, and soon I shall be dragged from my secret chamber and my life will be twisted by people I do not know.

Then death will be my enemy, no longer careless and aloof, but silently sparring round me—waiting to strike. I will be able to see death; comprehend death; and myself serve the purpose of destruction.

Here, in the mine, death is present, but personal, accepted, almost friendly. Switch off the lamp, and, in the darkness, death can be felt as a presence seated above every thought and action, Buddha-like and impassive. If you have been alone in a swimming bath at night, you will understand.

I cannot translate these emotions into words. I feel this impotence so vividly, and the incoherent pain bursts in my chest. All I can do is hack more savagely at the earth, like a prisoner gnawing at the bars of his cell. Striking again and again at the face of the coal until the brow of the rock juts over my body.

The joy of youth, the vigour and endeavour of living surges through me as I swing the pick, spurting even to my finger tips. The coal, that has lain for centuries undefiled, gleams before me. To attack it is like searing a bank of fresh snow or driving the first furrow across a virgin field.

Further and further I press into the earth in my mad escape. But it is all useless. The joy, the vigour, the endeavour of youth are of no purpose. It is because I fear them, and know that they will wither and be stifled, that I attack the earth, blinding my thoughts with the sweat of my fury.

Far better to rest; to crawl to the end of the ledge; and lie with the rock pressing gently on me, above and below, helpless and bitchy in the arms of the earth.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

LABOUR LEADERS AT THE IVY

THE IVY is one of my favourite restaurants, for I like its proprietor, who is always there on the spot, and I like its cooking, its situation, and its atmosphere. Now and again I have noticed some prominent members of the Labour Party eating a modest late lunch, usually in the room upstairs, away from the theatrical crowd. The knowledge that they are there, and not gobbling bread and margarine in some South London back kitchen, always gives me pleasure. Although I am against privilege and for the people, I do not want to be governed at any time by men who have spent years in back kitchens with bread and 'marge'. They will simply want to take it out of us all, consoling themselves for their ruined digestions by grabbing ferociously at power. And I am not being ironical.

There is another reason why the presence of these future rulers of ours (as I trust they will be) gives me pleasure. I hope they are not only sustaining themselves but also taking it all in, absorbing the atmosphere, for the Ivy, in spite of its popularity with the theatrical and film people, is a very civilized place. It is not one of the very luxurious and expensive restaurants, patronized by the fashionables and business men with a generous entertaining allowance, but is a favourite with those intellectuals and artists (of every kind) who can afford an occasional good meal. I have no doubt many genuine artistic enterprises have been planned there, as well as mere bits of nonsense. And these Labour politicians, no matter how hurriedly they move to their distant table, how deeply concerned they are with their own affairs, must sometimes observe their fellow diners and wonder what keeps them talking so hard.

Now I know that any Labour leader must see before him a vast programme of urgently necessary reform. The people must be decently housed, fed, clothed. Unemployment must vanish. Hours of work must be cut down and conditions of labour generally improved. The people must have liberal access to the products of their toil. Every lad must have his chance. Fine, fine! But then—what? Transport House may have given you an answer to this profound question, but not a whisper of a reply has ever come my way—not, that is, for a long long time.

When I was a boy I was surrounded by enthusiastic Labour folks, for I grew up in a stronghold of progressive politics. In those days there was still a suggestion of romantic idealism about Labour. What you wanted was not only better wages and fewer hours and the rest of it, but also a nobler quality of life. There may have been a bit too much William Morris and fancy leatherwork in their vision of the future, but that happened to be the taste of the time, and we are at liberty to substitute our own fancies in our own vision. That is, of course, if we have a vision. But it is that idea of a nobler quality of life which seems to have vanished from the vast Labour Party agenda. Now and then, in a peroration, it may be referred to in passing, but no single party action that I have ever noticed during the past few years seems to have been based upon it.

As a recent editorial here pointed out, culture has plenty of powerful enemies on the other side of the political fence. But what has Labour done to befriend it? I do not say that Labour has done nothing. What I can say, however, is that I have spent a lot of time these last years with writers, musicians, painters, sculptors, theatrical and film producers, philosophers and scholars, and that if Labour had ever given them even one encouraging glance, they never mentioned it. In the little occasional fights I have taken part in myself, I never remember a blow being struck on our side by organized Labour. The *Daily Herald*, for all I know to the contrary, may be an excellent political newspaper, but what it certainly is not, and never has been, is an intellectual and artistic

banner, shaming the other penny papers. And it is two Tory Sunday newspapers, and not their progressive competitors, that still acknowledge the existence of the things of the mind and spirit.

Now if I said as much to those earnest-looking Labour men sitting at their far table in the Ivy, they might reply at once that they have more important things to think about, that the cultural life must wait its turn. To which there are many retorts. To begin with, this indifference towards the intellectuals and the artists has been downright bad political tactics. Every worker not only 'with hand' but also 'with brain' should have been made to feel that he or she had a friend in the Labour Party. It should have been made plain to the artists that Labour was striving to create a world in which the arts could flourish. Even if these politicians could not make head or tail of what the artists were up to, they should have patted them on the back and said 'Stick to it. We're with you'. But not a word, not a glance.

Then again, one of the greatest enemies of political progress, just as it is one of the most faithful friends of reaction, is apathy, a fat, sleepy, unthinking, unfeeling state of mind and soul. Such apathy is frequently produced by that gadget-and-standardised-amusement kind of life, into which the English middle-classes, like the Americans, sink so easily. All the persons who do not want the people to think and feel for themselves are in favour of this kind of life, and do everything possible to shield it from attack. Now obviously anybody who can sap and mine these suburban fortresses and explode some original thought and deep feeling there, is a good ally of a progressive party, and should be encouraged to go raiding there every night. And how has Labour encouraged him?

Finally, it is clear that behind all the immediately necessary reforms, many of them as urgent as hot drinks and blankets to a shipwrecked crew, there must be some idea of the new kind of civilization whose organization must follow such reforms. We shall have to have something better than an unlimited supply of bungalows, cars and wireless sets. A

mere exchange of socialist robots for capitalist robots will never do. An idiotic and unsatisfying life managed by the state is no great improvement on an idiotic and unsatisfying life controlled by Messrs. Grab and Lord Snob. And it should not be forgotten, though I doubt if it has ever been considered in most Labour quarters, that Messrs. Grab and Lord Snob are in a much better position from which to tempt successfully the people who have more brains and energy than social conscience, because the Tory can point to a not unpleasant way of living, to be found in his country houses, shooting lodges, and the rest, and cry 'There's your prize, my boy'. And many are seduced, not because they want great wealth, power, enormous privileges, but because they see before them at least a prospect of an easy quiet life, a library into which to retire, a little collection of old water-colours, a garden.

Clearly there must be an alternative prospect, another way of living, an England that has not yet been seen. It cannot be anything like the country gentleman's England. Unless most of the population is to be exterminated, it will obviously have to be a truly urban civilization, which is something that at present we have not achieved. We shall have to discover a new and more satisfying way of living in towns and large villages. Delectable visions of it ought to be arriving at Transport House now every day. That is why the sight of these Labour men at the Ivy gives me so much pleasure. I am hoping that they meet there to plan this new England, which should have plenty of restaurants like the Ivy in it. Soon, no doubt, they will call some of their fellow guests, intellectuals, artists, to their table, and then if we listen quietly we may hear the foundations of Blake's Jerusalem being laid—oh, happy day!

R. IRONSIDE

BURNE-JONES AND GUSTAVE MOREAU

THE poetic gravity, the almost suave nostalgia, which distinguish the vision of Burne-Jones, were not exclusively the fruits of an English æstheticism, still less merely the symptoms of a Pre-Raphaelite measles induced by the personal influence of Rossetti. The history of artistic movements in the nineteenth century can, perhaps, only be satisfactorily told from an international point of view; the Pre-Raphaelite germ was itself active on the Continent and, similarly, the romanticism reflected in the painting of Burne-Jones, however esoteric in its finer shades, nevertheless illustrates a vein of poetry in painting which was developed generally in Europe about the middle of the century. Burne-Jones's particular inspiration is most closely paralleled abroad in the genius of Gustave Moreau; it is in these two artists that the vein is to be found at its richest and most elaborate. It appears in a less precious, more ample, but not more lovely form in the work of Puvis de Chavannes and Hans von Marées; it is present in the graver productions of Boecklin and in the less didactic conceptions of Watts, and was exploited by Ferdinand Hodler, whose work Puvis de Chavannes paused to admire at the Salon of 1891, and by Gauguin. It ramified in countless directions, and much of what is visionary in modern art derives its imaginative strength ultimately from this source. One does not run the risk in this connection of over-estimating the individual influence of Moreau or Burne-Jones. Needless to say they were not pioneers; from the start, their visions excited the reverence of a cultivated section of the public whose mind was at once attuned to accept them. But the brand of romanticism which they so exquisitely and entirely expressed was

rich in results: nothing could be more mistaken than to regard the art of either as an exotic backwater.

The impulses which inspired Burne-Jones are, in some measure, forecast in the art of Blake's disciples. Neither Calvert nor Palmer was disposed to follow his master in his course among the stars. They rejected his unearthly caste of angels and devils; their imaginations were not chained to the empyrean nor deadened by the contemplation of natural objects. They were idealists, recalling an idyllic life, and by implication refuting the civilization of their times, but they conceived their ideal in terms of the world about them. Calvert declared that 'in the kingdom of the imagination, the ideal must ever be faithful to the general laws of nature'. Palmer reacted vividly to external appearances; his early landscapes have a mythical quality because he was able 'to charm the truthfulness of eternal laws into a guise it never wore before'. (Calvert.) The pictures of both express the nostalgia for a golden age upon this earth. The very gardens of heaven, in their eyes, wore the aspect of the world; the 'natural man rose up against the spiritual man' with an ideal which sprung from the earth. The blessed existence evoked in their works was equally untouched by the swiftly moving drama which rocked the firmament of Blake's vision. Their landscape is still, their figures, for the most part, are inert or move with marble gestures through the charmed silence of their surroundings. It is largely to the absence of dramatic movement in their composition, of anything desperate or ecstatic in the emotions they express, that these pictures owe their great suggestive power. With the remarkable exception of the Virgil woodcuts, the convulsive actions of Blake's characters, their pronounced passions, are too explicit to exercise the imagination beyond the limits of the crisis which provoked them. The visions of Palmer and Calvert carry the spectator into a grave, unhampered world, of which the pictures themselves present only so many suggestive fragments. It is a world which is mythological in character, but has no precise links with any established set of legends. Its manifestations make no distinction between

Christian and pagan felicities: Ruth moves through the same enchanted regions as the herdsmen of the Eclogues, and arcadian shepherds tend flocks of sheep portrayed as religiously as those of Christ's pasture.

Calvert professed an admiration for Ingres as approaching in style the ideal of the ancients; such a preference may appear odd in a man whose art was essentially the poetic reflection of a daydream, yet it was the studio of Ingres which brought forth poets and dreamers for whom the life and art of vanished ages was a subject of reverie and meditation rather than a field for archæological discovery;¹ and it is Chassériau, the most gifted of the pupils of Ingres, in whose paintings emerges the nostalgia for a more harmonious and lovely world, the almost mystic attitude towards legendary existences which prompted the visions of Calvert and Palmer and were guiding impulses behind the art of Moreau and Burne-Jones. The influence of Delacroix upon Chassériau cannot, of course, be ignored; in so far as it enriched his palette, it was beneficial. On the whole, however, the artist is at his best when he eludes it, and at the same time truer, we may surely assume, to his original genius, to the genius which produced the *Venus Anadyomène* in which a contemporary critic perceived 'la mythologie rendue et comprise avec cette élégance rêveuse et passionnée qui manque souvent aux artistes grecs et ferait croire qu'ils ne comprenaient pas toute la poésie de leurs symboles.' The artist has indeed suffused the incident with a nostalgic

¹ Delacroix had no such following; irritated by the medieval enthusiasms of Amaury Duval and Mottez, preferring Mozart to Beethoven, detesting at times 'les Schubert, les rêveurs, les Châteaubriand', his position as leader of a romantic movement became in the end somewhat paradoxical. The very reputation of Ingres owed much, according to Théophile Gautier, 'aux cris d'admiration des critiques admirateurs du quinzième siècle' who detected in his painting the severe line of the Italian primitives. The statuesque, impassive, but still curiously intense quality of many of Ingres' conceptions—an intensity which pervades, for instance, the *Vœu de Louis Treize* and the extraordinary wall painting at the Ecole des Beaux Arts—stimulates the mind more surely than *La Liberté sur les Barricades* or *La Justice de Trajan*, the visible splendour of which captures rather than provokes the imagination.

dream-like flavour unwarranted by antique examples. His Venus is an intensely legendary creature, but by no means specifically the goddess of classical mythology. In spite of the influence of Delacroix and, though dazzled by the visual impressions of his excursion to Africa, his work was only momentarily characterized, or rather marred, by precise interpretation of the geographical or historical setting of his subject matter; many, even, of his Arab figures 'n'étaient que des statues grecques drapées de burnous et un peu brunies par le soleil d'Afrique'. His *Esther se Parant* displays 'un corps de déesse grecque à tête de Sultane'. (Gautier.) He is indeed the 'Indien qui a fait ses études en Grèce', who blends with his native mysteries the cults of classical paganism. Throughout his ideal remained, to repeat the phrase of Calvert, 'faithful to the general laws of nature'; 'trouver la poésie dans le réel', 'Faire monumental, mais pourtant réel' are among the precepts to be found in his notes.

These were the aspects of Chassériau's art which nourished the inspiration of Gustave Moreau, in whose work they were emphasized and complicated to a point beyond which they could scarcely have been developed. Moreau's intricate visions have an elaborate and deliberate splendour hardly paralleled in Chassériau. His consciousness of the possibility of weaving contemporary poetry out of the legends of the past was more pronounced than that of the earlier painter; the world he describes is immensely enriched and infinitely more fabulous. A telling choice of exquisite and precious accessories was a characteristic of his production from the beginning. *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort*, dedicated to the memory of Chassériau, and *Jason et Médée*, both of 1865, are early examples of the meticulous attention with which he selected and enamelled, rather than painted, such minutiae as the hilt of a sword, the border of a garment or the detail of a capital. The object of this patience was not simply finish; the metallic blossoms which luxuriate in the cave of Polyphemus, the fantastic gear which adorns the figures of *Femmes et Licornes*, the censers and aromatic shrubs of the forecourt in *David Méditant*, are an essential

means of realizing the particular strangeness, the *genius loci* of the painter's vision. Moreover, the accumulation of such details enriches the surface of the pictures: the jewelled girdles, elaborate crowns, drinking vessels, musical instruments, are at times worked upon to such an extent and presented in such profusion that the picture itself assumes the quality of a precious object as opposed to a work of art. Moreau proceeded according to a principle of 'la richesse nécessaire', by which he meant that brilliance of colour and splendour of *mise-en-scène* were virtues peculiar to painting. In some of his conceptions, notably in 'Sémélé', the kaleidoscope of decorative detail quite smothers the significance of the subject. Nevertheless, this attention to accessories usually increases rather than extinguishes the suggestive power of his pictures: enriches the quality of his painting without obscuring his conception.

The principle of a 'la richesse nécessaire' was coupled in his mind with a 'principe de la belle inertie'. The gravity and stillness which are part of the magic of Palmer's or Calvert's idyllic country, which emphasize the fateful personalities of Chassériau's *Esther* or *Venus*, were deliberately cultivated by Gustave Moreau. He considered that the study of movement led to melodrama. The more violent manifestations of human passion, their accompanying grimaces and gesticulations, scandalized his sensibilities as being too familiar, a gross intrusion upon the province of pure beauty. The gods, saints and heroes who inhabit his pictures are moved by 'les gracieuses mélancolies et les nobles désespoirs' of a highly rarefied poetic world. Their emotions are intense but distilled; their gestures, though eloquent, are slow, leisured and economical. The warriors crowding about the figure of *Tyrtée Chantant pendant le Combat* (a relatively early conception) might have been carved in ivory; even when they fall, their descent seems held in suspense. Tyrtaeus himself is a hieratic, impassive personage careless of the sacrifice at which he presides. The purely formal beauty of a pose or gesture is a dominating consideration. An attitude should never directly illustrate a

state of mind, but be a symbol of it, having a fixed, eternal character, the timeless significance of a cabbalistic sign. The most dire events are conceived as part of a ritual in which every gesture is as studied as the movements of a ceremony, every pose premeditated, or would appear to be so if we were not convinced that nobility of carriage and grace of attitude were instinctive in the characters concerned. The action of the wounded youth, usually known as the 'dying poet', in *Ulysse et les Prétendants*, would compel attention by its formal harmony alone. The exact context is not obvious; the figure makes a gesture of surprise at the fate which has overtaken him, or it might be that the movement is declamatory, that the poet dies in the very act of speaking his verse. The tragedy is more powerfully conveyed for the absence of psychological realism. Yet even such arrested movements are infrequent in Moreau's work. He described the figures of the Sistine frescoes to Ary Renan as 'figées dans un geste de somnambulisme idéal', a description which might certainly be applied to the magic beings of his own mythology. His inspiration, it has been said, 'n'est pas chaude dans son cœur, il la réduit en élixir, il la tient captivée dans une urne de diamant. . . .' (Henri Focillon.) His *Daughters of Thespius* are disposed about the palace of their father in rapt groups as if held by some charming but vaguely dreaded hallucination. His characters lose themselves in dreams and speculations more often than they act; for the most part they repose, as if their mere existence fulfilled some orphic mission. To his returning Argonauts, gathered motionless on the prow of their boat, he sought to give 'une teinte de gravité légère, de mélancolie tempérée, d'ivresse ensommeillée comme un parfum d'oranger voilé'. His still, impassive figures of Leda and Pasiphae seem sustained by a mysterious gnosis providing the spiritual key to the monstrous nature of their attachments.

The essential function of these paintings is to suggest depths of feeling beyond what is explicitly warranted by the incident depicted, to make the spectator aware of remote perspectives beyond the horizon of the picture space. The

artist evokes a transcendental life outside the limits of history, a life in which we are impelled momentarily to participate; we are introduced into the halls of his chimerical palaces, thread our way through the grottoes of his demi-gods, meditate upon wooded summits in the company of his gods. Such works as 'Hésiode et les Muses', 'Femmes et Licornes' and 'Autumn' are remarkable examples of the artist's power to project our minds into a spellbound land where everything is calm and voluptuous; where the most sinister happenings fail to disturb the enchantment. There is, however, a note of terror in the nostalgia with which the artist contemplates this world. The darker aspects of mythology, illustrated in 'Hercule au Lac Stymphale', 'Dionysos dévoré par ses Chevaux', are accepted, fearfully, as the indispensable underworld of a pagan idyll. Moreau held that the emergence of Christian beliefs freed the artist and poet from the fascination of antique deities who exercised their dominion with the impartiality of savage natural forces; few modern painters, however, appear to have felt more spontaneously, or provoked more surely, the nostalgia for a remote existence of which the figures of classical mythology were the visible symbols. The magnificence of his settings was supported by an erudition which embraced the whole field of mythology. He made quite arbitrary use of this learning; like the pastoral primitivism of Palmer and Calvert, the character of Moreau's legendary world was neither Greek nor Biblical nor Roman, but compiled from all these and from medieval and oriental sources also. The material was a source of poetry, even of a species of comparative religion, but was never the occasion of mere academic reconstruction. In flowered regions which suggest Persia rather than Helicon or Olympus, 'Les Muses quittent Apollon leur père, pour aller éclairer le monde'. The same sanctity illumines the sufferings of Prometheus and St. Sebastian. The physical features of his world were to some extent compounded from the art of past ages, from the antique, from the Italian—particularly Milanese—painting of

Sketch for 'The Sleeping Knights', the first subject of the Briar-Rose Cycle. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, from Persian miniatures. The confection was almost always original. Painting or literature which have become classic may provide a source of inspiration as fresh and direct as any spectacle or experience of nature. There is no hint of pastiche in Moreau's pictures. Though his imagination was stimulated by the art of the Museum, his means of expression were largely perfected in the study of nature. His figures and landscapes are not like apparitions for being distorted or impossible; he succeeds in investing the palpable world with super-eminent qualities.¹

Without enquiring precisely into the complicated nature of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, without sifting what was positivist and realist in it, a product of the European fervour of 1848, from what was poetic and transcendental, traceable to the example of Blake and his followers, it will be sufficient to say that these last aspects were predominant in the art of Rossetti. Confronted with one of his most intense designs, Burne-Jones was finally persuaded to abandon his project of entering the Church for the vocation of artist. Rossetti personally guided the course of his youthful productions. These it is customary to admire to-day, though they merely hint at the sphere of his personal vision, the full nature of which, when it ultimately became apparent, was seen to have more generalized roots. It may have been Watts who persuaded him to acquire an accomplished style as a draughtsman, less, one may suppose, as an aim in itself than in order that no problems of execution should obstruct the direct passage of the subject from the artist's mind into the picture. Certainly the fascination of Giorgonesque painting and of the more elegant and subtle aspects of fifteenth-century Florentine art contributed to the flow of rich but deliquescent images which characterize the central period of his production.

¹ Academy studies and other drawings of animals, preserved at the Musée Gustave Moreau, are of remarkable quality. It has been said that Moreau could '*faire vivre humainement des êtres invraisemblables*'; it has similarly been claimed for Boecklin that his mermen, satyrs, etc., were organically possible.

Something, without doubt, of the intensity of Rossetti's spirit remained with him then, though perhaps only in so far as such intensity was common to aspiring minds of the time. Before he had either met Rossetti or seen examples of his work, the writings of Ruskin had made him familiar with the idea of painting as a vocation rather than a profession, and the influence of Tractarianism had aroused in him an idealistic dislike of the age. Rossetti merely lit the lamp; the *Chant d'Amour*, *Green Summer*, and *The Merciful Knight* show only faint traces of his manner.

In these pictures, as in the works of Gustave Moreau, it is as if curtains had been parted upon a magic world. We are not prompted to consider their design or handling, but are ushered into the groves or meadows they depict and initiated into the circle of their inhabitants. In the absence of a universally accepted faith, in the midst of the encroachments of industrial progress, the painter is moved to adopt an imaginary ideal, to turn his back upon contemporary conditions of existence. He is recorded to have declared that he would like to forget the world and be inside a picture. His distaste for mere transcriptions, however feeling, of the phenomena of nature produced at one moment an estrangement between himself and Ruskin. Responding to a criticism of someone's work that it was done entirely out of his head, he affirmed that this was the place he thought pictures should come from. He has described the results of his own inner vision as the reflection of a reflection of something entirely imaginary. Yet though he disliked the civilization in which he found himself and looked for a time when he 'would arise and the night be gone', his work contains no hidden message or lesson. He did not believe in didactic art. He would sit and stare at a completed picture, wondering why he had begun and what he meant. The spectator is simply asked to share the dream; the art consists, as with Gustave Moreau, in the painter's power to suggest its scope and beauty. The miracle of the wooden figure of Christ momentarily assuming flesh and blood to embrace the Merciful Knight is significant as an incident in a mythical

sphere where such things might be expected to occur, and not as an illustration of the rewards of mercy.

Burne-Jones devoted the same care to the realization of detail as Gustave Moreau, though the object of this attention was more exclusively decorative. Roses, lilies and sun-flowers recur as motifs which adorn his conceptions rather than add to their suggestive force. His foliage is normally stylised into metallic clusters, his drapery often treated with a rhythmic, almost byzantine conventionality, which bears no close relation to his idea. In his finest achievements, however, in the *Perseus*¹ and *Briar-Rose* cycles², this essentially decorative element is at its least intrusive. In the latter, indeed, the rose was bound to be woven into the poetical structure of the pictures; in the first of the series, its flowers are used with a startlingly beautiful effect, being cast like a brocade over the obscurity of the forest. The preciously elaborated detail of *The Baleful Head*, the last picture of the *Perseus* series, is not simply ornamental but builds up the luxuriance of the garden retreat in which Perseus and Andromeda contemplate, in the reflection of a well, the aspect of Medusa. It is, however, by the deep richness of his colour less than by the accumulation of costly accessories that Burne-Jones may be said to achieve that 'richesse nécessaire' which Moreau considered to be 'le propre de la peinture'. The pictures of his early maturity irradiate a peculiar uneasy effulgence unlike the light of day, at times conveying the impression of a phosphorescent underworld, at others, notably in the *Perseus* series, producing transparent submarine effects and always suggesting a phantom region lit from a source more mystic and less limpid than the sun. 'Une belle inertie' reigns there, on the whole more languorous than that of Moreau; the place, it has been said, has the stillness of a visionary world in which the fiercest conflicts happen, as it were, to slow music. There is no expression of exertion in the struggle between Perseus and the monster, no attempt on the part of the artist to render an

¹ The Civic Centre, Southampton (large version). ² Lord Faringdon (large version).

effect of movement. More so than Gustave Moreau, Burne-Jones deliberately avoided dramatic action or expression. His *Briar-Rose* series includes no scene of the awakening of the princess. Such a final picture, he felt, must have disturbed the lyrical quiet and romance of the other four. The subject matter of these, intense and tranquil at the same time, was perfectly adapted to the quality of the painter's inspiration, demanding the realization of a legendary kingdom whose inhabitants, locked in an enchantment, are the images of a gracious existence magically reduced to silence and inertia. Such an idea is, indeed, an illustration of the nostalgic attitude the painter adopted towards the creatures of his imagination. The sketch for the first subject, reproduced here, though lacking the meticulous splendour of the larger of the finished versions, is a clearer revelation of the melancholy which has been sweetened and become implicit in the final picture. The impression that these captivated beings are transformed for the time being into inanimate objects is emphasized in the sketch by what is almost a repetition of their attitudes in the shapes of the shields suspended above them. Heaped together, their congealed figures have almost the character of an igneous deposit once instinct with life, but eventually to be merged into the soil upon which it fell.

A comprehensive and impartial love of mythology and legend directed Burne-Jones in the choice of nearly all his subjects. Arabian and Persian stories, the legends recounted in Spenser, Chaucer and Malory, the Celtic and classical myths, gave wings to his imagination, but, out of the sensations they aroused, he evolved a vision which ignored their precise attributes. He is recorded to have criticised Tissot's *Life of Christ* for the very accuracy of its local colour. He clothed his knights in armour deliberately unassociated with any historical period. There is not less unction in his figure of Pygmalion confronted by the incarnation of Galatea than in that of the Merciful Knight kneeling to receive the benedictions of a wooden Christ. A medievalistic flavour of a superficial kind undoubtedly pervades a considerable part of his production; it was to be expected from the particular

intellectual atmosphere in which he moved, and was rarely more than a transmuted reflection of any specific historical model. The art of the past worked upon his imagination, but he was not immediately concerned to imitate its spirit. Like Calvert and Palmer, he looked back to 'a morning of the world' of a quite generalized character. In this respect his great devotion to the Grail Legend is revealing. Of all Christian legends it is one of the richest in pagan associations. Whatever its origins, whether its first appearance was evidence of the continued practice in gnostic circles of some ritual connected with the worship of Adonis, or whether its roots are to be found in Celtic mythology, it seems clear that the story is a survival from the pre-Christian era adapted to Christian ideas. Burne-Jones is said to have regarded it as an explanation of life, and as a youth at Oxford he had helped to inspire a select but abortive 'order of Sir Galahad'. One may safely assume that he never linked the story with any kind of occult thought. It is interesting to note, nevertheless, that occultism was current in French literary circles during the 'eighties and 'nineties, and claimed among its adepts Laurent Tailhade and Villiers de l'Isle Adam; that Joséphin Péladan founded a Rosicrucian Society, including an 'Ordre du Graal', and instituted in 1892 a short-lived 'Salon de la Rose ❖ Croix', which assembled a group of painters who were evidently indebted to the example of Gustave Moreau. One may detect, indeed, a faint air of poetic theosophy in both Moreau and Burne-Jones. The life they evoke is, in certain of its manifestations, one in which spiritual questionings are mystically resolved.

An art which dwells pre-eminently upon conceptual images, which is concerned with elements of form, colour and composition almost exclusively, as the machinery for an inner vision, may be expected to reflect or be reflected in the literature of the time. The transcendental view of mythology, which largely constituted the point of departure from which Moreau and Burne-Jones proceeded to elaborate their visions, the nostalgia which breathes from their productions, were echoed, sometimes exactly, by contemporary poets.

Painting and poetry proved equally satisfactory as the vehicle for their ideas. Just as we may trace the artistic ancestry of Moreau more relevantly to Ingres and his followers than to Delacroix, its literary origins are to be found rather in the Hellenism of André Chénier than in the romanticism of 1830. Some years before Moreau began to paint, his regretful attitude towards the antique world was closely foreshadowed in *Le Centaure* of Maurice de Guérin, 'l'André Chénier du panthéisme', with the creature's complaint that 'les dieux errants ont posé leur lyre sur les pierres; mais aucun . . . aucun ne l'y a oubliée'. The emotions of the poem are completely expressed in Moreau's *Le Centaure et le Poète*. Flaubert loaded the canvas of *Salammbô* with the same lavish trappings which give lustre to the pictures of Moreau, the splendour of his accessories frequently forming the setting for acts of impassive ferocity such as Moreau depicted. The Parnassians and symbolists provide closer parallels. *Les Trophées* is largely a series of exquisitely composed word pictures evoking a fabulous existence, idyllic or monstrous, 'où vit court et prend l'essor le peuple monstrueux de la mythologie'. The sonnets *Email* and *Rêves d'Email* are projects for pictures in the vein of Gustave Moreau. Hérédia's vision of antiquity is less adulterated but not more powerful than Moreau's. His Jason and Medea, in a poem dedicated to the painter and based on his picture of the same subject, move 'en un calme enchanté', Medea's words issue forth 'par l'air magique ou flotte un parfum de poison'. His *Stymphale* demonstrates the ease with which the painter's conceptions could assume literary form. The strange and precious imagery of Mallarmé's *Hérodiade* inevitably suggests the atmosphere of Moreau's Salome series, though it must be confessed that the lucubrations of des Esseintes on the subject of these pictures come nearer the spirit of Moreau's Salome, which, of all the painter's conceptions, is one of the least successful and most strained. Moreau's visions undoubtedly exerted an influence upon certain phases of the symbolist movement in literature; in the *Motifs de Légendes et de Mélancolie* of Henri de Régnier,

who wrote verses for the painter's *Orphée*, and in *Le Mot de l'Enigme* and *La Lyre*, from Bernard Lazare's *Miroir des Légendes*, the debt is sufficiently revealed. It is worth noting that both Moreau and Burne-Jones inspired Jean Lorrain, the curious exponent of 'les artistes mystérieux', a number of whose poems were written for the former's pictures.

The last twenty years of the nineteenth century were a period during which painting and poetry drew together. Poets were increasingly concerned with imagery, painters were decreasingly content merely to respond to the nature they saw about them and delved into the recesses of their imagination for material which might equally well have emerged in literary as in pictorial form. The scenes Burne-Jones lays before us are those which the poets of his generation nostalgically evoked. The country of Morris's romances, the Wood beyond the World, the Well at the World's End, has the same magic features. The sphere of Morris's imagination, however, did not normally provide a romantic refuge; closely connected in his mind with a fanciful conception of the idyllic character of medieval life, he sought to revive its conditions in late Victorian England. The nostalgia of Burne-Jones was more nearly allied in feeling to Coventry Patmore's vague desires for the 'mythic time of England's prime'. The principal English source of the romantic imagery of the period was undoubtedly Tennyson. Burne-Jones never reached, perhaps did not seek, the peaks of lyrical intensity achieved by the poet. He was indebted rather to his calmer, more mellifluous moments, to what was essentially idyllic in the *Idylls of the King*. His *Merlin* and *Nimue* is Tennysonian in all but the uncomfortable passion which runs through the poet's version of the legend. The figures of Burne-Jones have the graciousness of Tennyson's more distilled characters, but appear almost as if they had been weakened, through prayer and fasting, like the Damsel of the Holy Grail, and might have risen and floated when one looked upon them. The *Briar-Rose* must have been prompted by the *Day-Dream*, but it is altogether a more solemn and melancholy production; Burne-Jones's

'Sleeping Beauty', whose awakening is not depicted, has, perhaps, more in common with James Thomson's 'death-still' and 'life-sweet' 'Lady of the Images'. The art of Burne-Jones was not only inspired by poets, but also itself inspired them. Morris wrote verses for the *Briar-Rose*, and Rossetti set his *Circe* to poetry. Swinburne, whose first volume of poems and ballads was dedicated to the painter, is permeated with the same emotional, sensuous attitude towards the legends of Christianity and antiquity. Echoes of Burne-Jones's imagery and sentiment recur in the work of O'Shaughnessy, professedly 'a dreamer of dreams', a 'world loser' and a 'world forsaker'. In France, his art aroused the admiration of Péladan, and the Belgian Symbolist, Iwan Gilkin (for whose work Odilon Redon designed frontispieces), composed a play, 'Le Roi Cophétua', admittedly inspired by the well-known picture.

It would be quite useless to approach the study either of Burne-Jones or Moreau with the notion that 'formal relationships', 'pattern', 'structure', etc., have any absolute value in a picture as though it had practical functions requiring firmness or commodity, or, indeed, with the intention of considering colour as an abstract element to be praised or criticized for its own sake as one would the colour variations of a wallpaper or a carpet. The critical attitude which principally relies on such criteria is not only one which would be patently dealing with non-essentials in the case of Moreau or Burne-Jones, but one which, whatever its subject, tends to confuse the means with the ends, or at best to over-estimate the ends. Considered strictly as fulfilling an instrumental function, however, the design, the architecture of a picture, the sympathetic handling of the medium in which it is painted, may be invaluable qualities. They are qualities which are certainly present in the work of Gustave Moreau and Burne-Jones. The latter's illustrations to the Kelmscott books were too prolific, but provide a body of evidence for his powers of design; the best of his pencil drawings are remarkable for a self-assured elegance which arises largely from purity of contour or intricacy of pattern. Moreau's

water-colours display an extraordinary technical brilliance, an apparent spontaneity, a subtle colour sense which entirely justifies Odilon Redon's opinion of him as 'incontestablement un grand aquarelliste'. In the principal achievements of both painters, however, it is the conception which counts—to the realization of which, indeed, these other qualities make an inevitable contribution, but without distracting the attention from the interest of the artist's subject. The interpretation of the subject matter, the beauty of the conception, must be the basis for appreciation or criticism of their work. It may be said that both Moreau and Burne-Jones were prolific workers, and it must be admitted the quality of their production is unequal. Their value depends upon a priceless residue, as, for example, does Tennyson's. Burne-Jones's more ambitious pictures are usually his most successful: many of his single figures are vapid rather than delicate. His later designs for stained glass are facile and repetitive. Indeed, the final period of his activity, during which he employed assistants, is one of declining inspiration. The immense *Arthur in Avalon*, which he left unfinished at his death, is a conventionalized piece entirely without the magic which still faintly pervades *the Launcelot at the Chapel of the Holy Grail*. Towards the end of his career, he inclines to whittle away the earlier resonance of his colour, partly, it has been suggested, as a result of doubts raised as to the permanence of colours then being manufactured; whatever the reason, the loss was a fatal one. It is equally easy to indicate defects in the work of Moreau, which exhibits at times an extravagance which is tasteless rather than magnificent. A vice of interpretation of the kind which Berenson discovers in *The Last Supper* disfigures his *Salome* cycle and his *Jacob et l'Ange*. The religious lesson he embodied in his final, vast, unfinished *Chimères* introduces an unsatisfactory element strongly at variance with the poetic vein of his best pictures. These are, without exception, in the too rarely visited Musée Gustave Moreau and in private collections. The artist has too often been considered in the light of inferior *Phaëton*, *Jeune Fille Thrace* and *L'Apparition* in the French national

collections, just as judgements of Watts often seem based on the grandiloquent machines in the Tate Gallery without reference to the illuminating collection at Compton. Many of the most lovely conceptions of Burne-Jones, *Green Summer*, the *Briar-Rose*, *Aurora*, the *Wheel of Fortune*, are in private hands, though *The Legend of Perseus* is accessible to the public in the Southampton Gallery; only the most inadequate idea of the artist's imaginative range can be formed from the mediocre representation of his work in the London galleries.

There is no doubt that the influence of Gustave Moreau played a considerable part in the anti-realist reaction which took place in French painting and letters in the 'eighties. Though its traces may be more apparent in literature, it is clear that both the mystics and symbolists in painting owed something to Moreau's visionary art. However faint the present reputation of the former, their art was, with the enduring contribution of the symbolists, an historical factor in the development of modern art in its imaginative aspects. The list of Moreau's pupils, since become illustrious, is sufficiently well known, and at least it may be said that Rouault and Guérin drew inspiration not only from his teaching but also from his example. Moreau evidently influenced Devallières (who succeeded Rouault as curator of the Musée Moreau) and Odilon Redon. It has even been curiously claimed for Matisse that, if not in his manner at least in his vision, he retains more than is supposed of Moreau's teaching. Impressionism, an extreme form of realism, proved to be a blind alley. Cézanne's instinct for the monumental and static was in frequent conflict with the impressionist outlook by which his vision had undoubtedly been affected. Seurat, who studied and cultivated the implications of impressionism, is less valued for his 'divisionism' than for the nobility and gravity of his composition, qualities which it is likely he derived from Puvis de Chavannes, who communicated them also to Gauguin. The inspiration of Puvis, though it assumed a more limpid and less disturbing form, was closely analogous to that of Gustave Moreau.

There is the *Vision Antique* side by side with the *Inspiration Chrétienne*; the art of both asserts a formal gravity, 'a belle inertie', as a means of expression. The transition from what almost amounted to a classical conception of form combined with a purely idealistic vision, (even though this be expressed in accordance with the laws of nature) to an art such as flourishes to-day in which representation is incidental, is one which it is not difficult to conceive. It can, in fact, be observed taking place in the pictures of Gauguin. Maurice Denis could reconcile symbolism with the famous view that 'un tableau est essentiellement une surface plane recouverte de couleurs dans un certain ordre assemblées.'

In England the art of Burne-Jones produced febrile imitators, Evelyn Pickering, Waterhouse, Spencer-Stanhope, and the more interesting Strudwick, (to whom Bernard Shaw devoted an admiring article in the *Art Journal* of 1891), but it exercised no enduring influence. Simeon Solomon, Beardsley, Ricketts were indebted to Burne-Jones; their talent however, though occasionally exquisite, was minor and without issue. The achievement of Walter Crane was exclusively decorative. Through his connection with Morris, Burne-Jones was himself overwhelmed by decorative undertakings in the execution of which his gift as a painter failed to expand and was even impoverished. The revival of the decorative arts, of which Morris was the light and impetus, and the influence of which was European, must be considered as one of the dominating artistic developments of the close of the century. One cannot help regretting that Morris never cultivated his own gift as a painter and that he diverted Burne-Jones from the poetic introspection which prompted his best work. It may be conjectured that the vitality of the revival in decoration and, to a more deadly extent, the vigorous elements introduced by the New English Art Club combined to exclude the possibility of any progressive tendencies arising out of the achievements of Watts, Rossetti, and, above all, Burne-Jones. The growing prestige in this country of the French realist and impressionist groups, which was manifested in the strivings of the New

English Art Club, however deserved, was most belated; even so, the exhibitors at the New English approached the French masters without knowledge of their greatest works. The realist themes of such men as Clausen, Bramley, La Thangue, etc., were derived from Bastien-Lepage rather than from Manet; in their method, they sought guidance from 'pleinairism' rather than impressionism or found fresh sources of strength in the example of Constable and Turner. They were making their efforts in this direction at a time when Manet was already dead, his art winning ever wider acceptance, and when the Salon des Indépendants was already founded. Developments were further complicated by the perhaps necessarily indigestible form in which the many and important movements in French painting subsequent to impressionism made themselves felt in this country. In 1910, an exhibition of French painters was held at the Grafton Galleries with the misleading title of 'Manet and the Impressionists'. It introduced for the first time to the London public the work of Cézanne, Gauguin, Matisse, Odilon Redon, Laprade, Picasso, Seurat, Denis, and others, a group of painters who, without the inclusion of Manet, would present sufficiently conflicting tendencies. The exhibition was followed by a 'Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition' in 1912 which included pictures by several of the same artists and also works by personalities so various as Van Dongen, Stanley Spencer, Braque and Henry Lamb. When one considers the extreme nature of Turner's final phase (which really excluded the possibility of discipleship), the impressionism implicit in Constable's pictures, the powerful realism of the first phase of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, one is bound to conclude that the foundation of the New English Art Club presented an element of fatal reaction, that, if it had never occurred, the art of Burne-Jones might well have brought forth a progressive symbolism which would have rendered the compelling influences of modern French painting less disconcerting.

WILLIAM EMPSON

PASSING THROUGH U.S.A.

I SPENT three months in America on the way home from China, getting to Los Angeles about the middle of November, and spending most of the time in Boston. The points about America's attitude to the war are well enough known but seem worth reviewing. I don't want to tell anecdotes except as they illustrate points. However, if any of my American friends see this article, as I hope they will, I want to assure them that I enjoyed and admired the country very heartily, and am grateful for their hospitality; if I seem a bit rude I am only taking for granted the same kind of freedom that they do about England. The amount of tact that goes on on our side is not healthy and must look a bit suspicious. Let me recommend the recent cry of A. P. Herbert, to the effect 'Pray God we can get through this without help from America!'—without the let-down after the up-lift, and the feverish bad temper about paying them for their noble sacrifices, and all the rest of it. A lot of people here would echo that, and for that matter the most important help America can give us at present is to hold the fort in the Far East, as she is doing. So I am not doing propaganda at them to drag them in. At the same time, from the point of view of the English reader, we want all the help we can get, and the first question about America is the propaganda set-up there.

The Americans have less spontaneous dislike of propaganda than we have, but much more fear of it at present. They like a good line of talk, a dramatic show, public excitement, and often even when they call it ballyhoo, don't much care whether it is or not. They are much more used than we are to the idea that advertisement keeps the economic system going even when false, so that it does good. And the assumptions that produced Christian Science (more widespread than

the religion itself) tie up with that; Americans easily feel that belief produces its object, and their politicians in speeches continually say 'I believe' (some comforting belief) with an effect of labouring to make it true. All this makes them good subjects for propaganda. But they know all this, and they are very much afraid of being dragged into the war. Another point is that they believe in machinery more passionately than we do; and modern propaganda is a scientific machine; so it seems to them obvious that a mere reasoning man can't stand up against it. This produces a curiously girlish attitude to anyone who might be doing propaganda. 'Don't let that man come near. Don't let him tempt me. Because if he does I'm sure to fall.' (Compare the screams at the British over Munich—'Go on. Be a man'. Nobody supposed that U.S. had to be a man; it was enough for her to be pure.) As in the parallel case this coy accusation is often put out against persons with no such intention; there were times when I felt quite sure that if I had stood on my head and sung 'Three Blind Mice' the party would only have wondered placidly why the British Government had paid me to do *that*. On the whole, therefore, it is very unwise for the British to send over avowed propagandists, or even to encourage people who happen to be there to do a bit of it (in recognizable form). To be sure, it is recognized that the Ambassador is simply doing his usual job, but simple avowed propagandists come up against a good deal of hatred as public seducers, trying to kill our boys, and tend to get the rather false idea that the country is full of anti-British feeling. I gather the Ministry of Information realizes all this, but that propagandists are still trickling over; maybe it is hard to stop them. Another element in the set-up is that a hullabaloo in the American papers dies very fast and does not much correspond to the voting prospects even then. Practically all the papers (this is a rough impression) were hullabalooing against Repeal of the Arms Embargo, and many publishing rousing anti-British stuff, though the quieter ones would sometimes add that the measure would obviously go through; then as soon as it had gone through they all cheerfully went

back to shouting against Hitler and Stalin. Though largely machine-made, this surging to and fro goes on a good deal in actual opinions, and would be the vote if the vote was taken then. You may say that Baldwin knew quite as much as Roosevelt about catching the public on the rebound, but in England the machinery seems less recognized by the public. You get chatty articles in America about how the best thing is to get a strong campaign against you, coming to its climax six months before your election, because in that time the public mind is sure to swing to its opposite extreme. It is clear that propaganda in a country of nervous restlessness and wild freedom of untested assertion in the press is quite a different thing from propaganda in, say, Germany.

For voting you want quick, or rather timed, propaganda, but for most other purposes, conducting a war or selling a soap, you want a fairly permanent growth even if a slow one. As between one country and another this is done much more by what is overheard than by what is heard. The reports in American papers of what is published as news in England are much more likely to make an impression of the solid kind than any propaganda said to be such. And this although they, of course, take the British news to be propaganda. They like that: it is interesting; so long as it is not felt to be aimed at *them*. On the other hand, if it seemed likely that America would vote on whether to come into the war at a definite date, then the British would be concerned with timed propaganda, and then an open bid for American good opinion would be in order. That is, it would not excite anti-foreign fear and hatred if it was one element in a native hullabaloo. But it might still be so much disbelieved as to work backwards.

One element that makes America likely to enter the war is the widespread conviction that she somehow can't help it. The same man who has told you excitedly that America has nothing to get out of the war, and that it's no business of hers, and that everybody in America feels that, will say next: 'Well, I give it a year, we'll be in'. It is not at all clear to him why he feels this, or to me. One reason may be the extremely strong conviction of Americans that they are the most

important people in the world, the strongest, the best, the most responsible. When there was some neutrality puzzle two or three months ago about searching an American ship, the *Boston Evening Transcript* came out with a headline: U.S. AGAIN TAKES SPOTLIGHT IN WORLD WAR. It was hard to conceive of a war in which U.S. did not take spotlight. But even here it is hard to separate the worthy feeling of being somehow responsible for the rest of the world from the feeling of being helplessly caught in some kind of machine.

Then there is Pacifism, a very twisted moral impulse. If, when talking to American young men who argue, not merely that all wars are wicked, but that no war ever achieves its object, you say 'How about the American War of Independence?' they are honestly astonished. It would never occur to them to test so holy an ideal by examples. The American papers are a bit sensitive about selling scrap-iron to Japan, but not because this helps Japan to defeat China, merely because those same bits of scrap-iron may be made into guns, and that would be shocking. It is the mood of the refined lady who would be honestly horrified—would think it part of her character to be horrified—at seeing a pig killed; she has no idea of giving up pork. This is, of course, not illogical; indeed it may be a good thing to keep up an artificial delicacy of feeling; but it is a matter of squeamishness and not at all of principle. Rather cheerful to have a German cartoon, in the Finnish campaign, of a Finn on an iceflow being attacked by a bear, and the American pushing him out an object on a long pole and saying: 'I think I can allow myself to give you a little woolly muff'. To have given (that is, sold) a gun would have been shocking. These twists, of course, go with a genuine sense of superior virtue. When Congress decided to stop all American ships going to belligerent countries, for fear of trouble, the American press said that this was 'the greatest sacrifice that any country had ever made for peace'. Meanwhile, because of the other pole of this set-up, the American desire for something 'tough' to cheer forward, the British are getting positively unpopular for not attacking the Siegfried line. It is not enough of a

show after all the advertisement. 'It's a phoney war' is the sinister cry of the spectator who wants his money back.

It is difficult to see how America is to carry the weight in the outside world which she regards as her due if she can't play the normal game of bluff in diplomacy. The Japanese don't believe that America will fight them under any circumstances, so aren't impressed by threatening diplomatic steps towards that final stage. It seems likely, in fact, that the gradually increasing American economic pressure merely screws the Japanese up, by making a dignified retreat more difficult.

But it is fair to say that they have a good influence on one country—our own; fear of American opinion is probably the chief thing stopping us from being as kind to Japan as we would otherwise be tempted to be. And only fair to say, for that matter, that anybody might very reasonably be suspicious of the ultimate intentions of Chamberlain. The only reason that this line of talk seems off the point to a liberal-minded Englishman is that he feels, and feels sure Chamberlain feels, that the first thing to do is to win the war.

You realize, no doubt, that the Old War Debts are much the most prominent feature of the war situation in the minds of nearly all Americans, including many intelligent and well-informed persons. The reason for the vast American love for Finland (expressed by assertion of 'belief' in Finland—FRONT SEEMS LIKE HOME TO FINNS—*New York Times*) is due to the fact that Finland paid her War Debt to America. It seems that in recent years this ceremony has actually been done by carrying a bag of gold from one part of Washington to another. It was a major diplomatic blunder when the British refused even to discuss the question of war debts further with the Americans. Many intelligent and well-informed Englishmen would explain to the Americans that this money would only have done America harm in the time of the slump. This technique also produced regular quarrels in the bars of the Far East, when the English explained to the Germans that there is no economic advantage in having colonies. All this line of propaganda (though pretty

well all such talkers are earnestly convinced) is likely to pierce the hand that uses it.

The immense number of Irishmen, usually not very rich, prominent in bars, who hate the British very actively, ought also to be mentioned. What they seem to hate most is the British voice (I have known a coat taken off as soon as I opened my mouth in an Irish-American bar, though, to be sure, put on soon enough when I had said some things with it), and if shielded from it they would probably not worry so much about British policy. To them one of the most insane and obviously repulsive forms of the British voice is the B.B.C. voice, and it seems quite important to shield them from that.

On the other hand, there is a dangerous amount of sub-Nazi propaganda disguised as pacifist and anti-imperialist, and it seems very feeble to say that none of this can be answered. Surely it would be a reasonable plan to enlist the French on this. An official French broadcaster talking English with a French accent to America, linked up with a French Canadian if you like, would pass all the main propaganda resistances. The Americans do not seem to have been told, as we have, that the French are cruel to their empire; nobody says the French danger in the war is 'phoney', or gets infuriated by a French accent. It seems the most active way out.

CECIL DAY LEWIS

WEATHER SIGNS

(Translated from the *Georgics* of Virgil, Book I)

So that we might be able to predict from manifest signs
 These things—heatwaves and rain and winds that bring cold
 weather,
 The Father himself laid down what the moon's phases should
 mean,
 The cue for the south wind's dropping, the sign that often
 noted
 Should warn a farmer to keep his cattle nearer the shippoon.
 At once, when winds are rising,
 The sea begins to fret and heave, and a harsh crackling
 Is heard from timbered heights, or a noise that carries far
 Comes confused from the beaches, and copses moan
 crescendo.
 At such a time are the waves in no temper to bear your
 curved ship—
 A time when gulls are blown back off the deepsea flying
 Swift and screeching inland, a time when cormorants
 Play on dry land, and the heron
 Leaves his haunt in the fens to flap high over cloud.
 Another gale-warning often is given by shooting stars
 That streak downsky and blaze a trail through the night's
 blackness
 Leaving a long white wake:
 Often light chaff and fallen leaves eddy in the air,
 Or feathers play tig skimming along the skin of water.
 But when lightning appears from the quarter of the grim
 north wind,
 When it thunders to south or west, then all the countryside
 Is aswim with flooded ditches and all the sailors at sea
 Close-reef their dripping sails. No, rain need never take us
 Unawares: for the airy cranes have flown to low-lying valleys

To escape the rain as it rises, or else a calf has looked up
At the sky and snuffed the wind with apprehensive nostrils,
Or the tittering swallow has flitted around and around the
lake,
And frogs in the mud have croaked away at their old
complaint.
Often too from her underground workings the emmet,
wearing
A narrow path, bears out her eggs; a giant rainbow
Bends down to drink; rook-armies desert their feeding-
ground
In a long column, wing-tip to wing-tip, their wings whirring.
Now seabirds after their kind, and birds that about Caÿster's
Asian waterflats grub in the fresh pools, zestfully fling
Showers of spray over their shoulders,
Now ducking their heads in the creek, scampering now at
the wavelets,
Making a bustle and frivolous pantomime of washing.
Then the truculent raven full-throated calls for rain
As she stalks alone on the dry sand.
Even at night can girls, spinning their wool, be sure
That a storm approaches, for then they behold in the
burning lamp
The oil sputter and crumbly mould collect on the wick.

No less easy it is to foretell after rainy weather
Sun and unclouded skies, and by sure indications to know
them.
Then, neither do star-rays look blurred nor will the moon
rise
As though she owed her light to the beams of her brother
sun,
Nor lank and fleecy clouds be drawn across the heaven:
Kingfishers then, the pets of the Sea-goddess, will not preen
their
Plumage along the shore in the warm sun, nor will gross
Swine remember to root and toss with their snouts the bed-
straw.

Rather do mists hang low and couch along the plain,
And the little owl, perched on a gable, watching the sun go
down

Keeps at her crazy night-call.

Aloft on the lucid air Nisus, changed to a merlin

Appears, and Scylla pays for that purple hair she stole:

Wherever in flight she parts the thin air with her lark's wing,

Look!—her enemy, cruel, down the wind loudly whistling

Nisus follows her close; when Nisus zooms upwind,

Frantic in flight she parts the thin air with her lark's wing,

Then rooks, the guttural talkers, three times or four repeat

A clear cool note, and often up there in the treetop cradles,

Charmed by some unfamiliar sweet impulse we cannot

guess at,

Gossip among the leaves: they love, when rain is over,

To visit again their baby brood, their darling nests.

It's not, to my belief, that God has given them

A special instinct, or Fate a wider foreknowledge of things;

But, when the weather's changing, when the wet atmos-

phere

Shifts and a sky dripping from the south wind condenses

What was rare just now and rarefies what was condensed,

New images possess their mind, impulses move

Their heart other than moved them while the wind was

herding the clouds.

Thus, the countryside over, begins that bird-chorale,

Beasts rejoice, and rooks caw in their exultation.

J. MACLARYN-ROSS

A BIT OF A SMASH

Absolute fact, I knew damn all about it; I'd been on a blind in Fenner's with some of the boys and I was on my way back when a blasted pi dog ran out in the road and I swerved the car a bit to avoid it. I don't remember the crash or anything, I must have hit into them and driven straight on to the bungalow without stopping. I was so damn tight I don't remember anything, but these fellows were coming out of Fenner's, the two of 'em, and they saw it all right and this bastard Krishnaswami recognised me: I'd a big open Vauxhall is those days and I was driving with the hood down.

The night-watchman from Spinner's saw it too and he came across and there were these coolies pretty badly smashed about, one of them had a broken leg and God knows what, and Krishnaswami was shouting that he'd seen me and knew who I was. Mind you, he was properly sewn-up himself, and the other bloke with him was so bad that the station inspector refused to accept his evidence. But Krishnaswami had got the number of my car, so after they'd carted the two coolies off to hospital, the inspector came down to the bungalow to see me.

At that time I shared quarters with a chap called Stanton, he was with the company too, a damn decent chap, and when the peon told him this inspector was out there asking for me, he came into my room and there I was, of course, dead to the world. So Stanton went out and told the inspector I was asleep and could he come back later and the inspector said all right. When he'd gone Stanton woke me up and told me about it. Honest, it came like a bolt from the ruddy blue: I couldn't remember a thing.

"Accident?" I said. "What the hell are you talking about? I haven't had any accident."

"One of the coolies may die," Stanton said.

"But it's nothing to do with me."

"The inspector says he's got your number."

"God sakes," I said.

"You'd better snap out of it," Stanton said. "He's coming back presently," so I got up and bawled for the peon to get my bath ready. This was five in the morning, mind you, and I felt foul. I'd an awful head and a mouth like a sewer from smoking. I couldn't understand what it was all about; I thought they'd got me mixed up with someone else.

After my bath I felt better, but I was still pretty bad. I kept drinking whacking great cups of black tea, and about seven the inspector came back. He was a native, but quite a nice chap; I've forgotten his name. He brought two other men with him, and these stayed outside taking photographs of my car, which had a mudguard buckled and one of the headlamps knocked back. I'd already had a look at it, and it certainly seemed I had been in a smash, though I still couldn't remember anything.

Of course, directly these fellows started taking photos, I saw the red light, so when the inspector asked me if I'd make a statement, I said no, not without seeing a lawyer first.

"Very well," the inspector said, "but I'm afraid I shall have to ask you to accompany me to the station."

"Is this necessary?" I said.

"I'm afraid so, sir," he said. "Purely a matter of form, you know," so I said all right but could I call at my solicitor's on our way down. The inspector said certainly and who was my solicitor?

"Mr. Shankran," I said.

Of course the inspector knew Shankran: everyone in Chandrapore did. I'd never had to employ him myself, but we'd always been good pals and I knew he'd always be ready to help me out of a hot spot. Besides, he was a damn smart lawyer: look what he did for Cornford that time he

crashed into a Mohammedan funeral and killed five. Why, Cornford would have got life if it hadn't been for Shankran; as it was he got off with three years, and on top of that Shankran raised such an awful stink everyone was scared stiff of him; he had several officials sacked, two police sergeants reduced to the ranks, and even got the magistrate reprimanded—all through pull. I tell you, if Shrankran couldn't get me off, nobody could.

But on the way to the station, I remembered that I didn't know his address, so I asked the inspector to pull up at Fenner's, which he did.

"By God, Adams old boy," Fenner said when he saw me, "you're in a mess this time."

"I seem to be," I said: luckily the inspector had stayed outside in the car.

"By God you are," Fenner said. "I've had the police round wanting to know all about you, what state you were in when you left, if you were sober, and God knows what. Course they got no change out of me."

"Did they ask to see the bar-chits?"

"Not yet. But you needn't worry: I've fixed those."

"Thanks, old boy," I said.

"Anything to oblige," Fenner said, winking.

"Did you see the accident?" I asked him.

"No, but it sounds pretty serious from what I hear."

"I'm just off to the station now."

"Seen a lawyer yet?"

"No. I'm going to get Shankran."

"Couldn't do better, old boy."

"Matter of fact, that's what I came to ask you for—his address."

So Fenner told me and I went back to the inspector and he drove me round to Shankran's bungalow. He was just having *chota hazri* when his boy announced us and he jumped up from the table as we came in, holding out his hand. He was a Brahmin, small and wearing goldrimmed glasses, and you couldn't tell his age from his looks.

"Hullo, hullo, hullo," he said. "Adams, eh? How are you keeping? Sit down, sit down. Have some breakfast?"

"I wouldn't mind a drink."

"Certainly, certainly. Boy, bring some gin! Sit down, Adams, don't look so worried!"

He seemed a bit surprised to see the inspector, but he said hullo to him too, and spoke a few words in Tamil, and the inspector smiled.

"Look here, Shankran," I said, "I'd like your advice. It seems I had a bit of a smash last night."

"Oh? Well, well. Not a bad one, I hope? Ah, here's the gin. That's right, put it on the table. Help yourself, Adams. Inspector?"

The inspector said he wouldn't, being on duty. I felt better after I'd swallowed some gin.

"Now tell me all about it," Shankran said. He spoke to the inspector in Tamil and the inspector went out on the verandah, leaving us together. I told Shankran what I knew, while he walked up and down saying "Yes. Yes. Yes," sucking at a cigarette without touching it to his lips, the way Brahmins do.

"Yes. Yes," he said. "Of course I'll do my best for you. Trust me. Yes. Inspector!"

The inspector came in.

"How badly are these coolies hurt?" Shankran asked him.

"One of them is not expected to live, sir."

"H'm. H'm. That's bad. Yes." Shankran turned to me. "Pity you couldn't come here at once, directly it happened. There'd have been no case, I would have squashed it from the start. Now, of course—h'm." He sucked at his cigarette, thinking. Then suddenly he turned to me again, holding out his hand. "All right," he said. "Don't you worry. I'll see you through. Make no statements to any one. Keep mum and meet me in Fenner's tonight, nine o'clock."

He came to the door with us, telling me again not to worry, and we drove off. He was a damn good scout, Shankran, and except for his skin a good deal whiter than

some of those swine that swank about the club thinking they're sahibs. I felt better now the case was in his hands.

We got down at the station and went in and there were a few native police standing about in boots and puttees, but nobody else. The inspector sat down at his desk and was starting to ask me a few questions when suddenly there were voices raised outside and that swine Holt, the Assistant Commissioner, came storming in.

"Arrest that man!" he shouted as soon as he saw me. "Put him under arrest!"

"But Mr. Holt——" I started to say.

"Be silent!" he shouted, and to the inspector: "Detain him, don't let him get away. He's a dangerous man!"

Of course this was damn ridiculous, and unprecedented to boot, treating a European that way. Truth was, I'd had a bit of trouble with Holt over the licensing of buses: he was Traffic Commissioner as well and he didn't like me. He was only doing this to get his own back.

"Can I have bail, sir?" I said.

"Bail? Yes. A thousand rupees," and with that he stamped out of the station. Well, of course, the inspector didn't put me in a cell; I was simply shut in a room on my own. I'd just thought I should be phoning the office, when who should roll in but old Major Brant: he'd been with me the night before and had heard about the accident from Fenner.

"Well, Adams," he said, "in a jam again."

"By God I am. It's that bastard Holt. He put me under arrest."

"Won't they let you have bail?"

"A thousand chips."

"That's all right, old boy. I'll fix it for you."

So he went bail for me and the inspector let us out. We went down to Fenner's and Brant said: "Boy, bring Master a large brandy." So I drank three large brandies altogether and Brant said he'd testify I was sober the night before, because a short time before I left I'd been playing the big drum in the dance band and it's difficult to keep time when

you're tight—although I had done it apparently. What's more, Brant said, I had been dancing with his wife earlier on, and he certainly wouldn't let his wife dance with a drunken man. He winked at me and I thanked him and got off to the office. When I came in there the secretary had a message the Old Man wanted to see me.

"What's the meaning of all this, Adams?" Sir Alec said.

"Well, sir, I had a bit of a smash last night."

"So you said last time you drove your car into a tree and smashed it up completely. Were you drunk?"

"No, sir."

"Why didn't you stop then?"

"I must have lost my nerve."

"Humph!" Sir Alec said. "Well, this is Dr. Menon, the company solicitor, who will act for you."

Dr. Menon came forward and shook hands. He was a Hindu, Oxford-degree, B.B.C. accent, and all in European dress, even to the green felt hat lying on the desk: people don't wear topees the whole time out East the way you read about in books. I knew Menon slightly: he was a slimy skite and I wouldn't trust him an inch. I didn't let on I'd already been to Shankran.

Menon suggested we should go down to the scene of the accident, and I said all right, without telling him I didn't know where it was. I knew it was somewhere near Fenner's because the inspector had told me so, and we drove down there. Of course all traces had gone by this time, and Menon said he could do nothing more at the moment.

"It all depends on the condition of the coolies," he said. "I will enquire at the hospital and let you know later."

"Righto," I said.

That night I went into Fenner's to wait for Shankran. I was sitting outside drinking a double scotch when a chap came up to me called Turpin, awful little squirt he was, supposed to be a jockey, though he never seemed to do any riding. Matter of fact, I found out afterwards he'd been warned off.

"Evening, Mr. Adams," this chap said to me.

"Evening," I said. I'd never spoken to the little bastard before and wondered what in hell he wanted.

"Sorry to hear about your smash last night," he said. "It was a bad break."

"Yes."

"Nasty thing to happen."

"Yes."

"Suppose this coolie croaks. You'll be in the cart."

"Yes."

"But maybe I can help."

"How?" I said.

He looked round to see no one was listening, then leant across the table. I moved back a bit: the little bleeder stank of booze.

"Look here," he said. "It happens I know the bloke that's making all the bother. Name of Krishnaswami. He's the bloke you want to look out for."

"How d'you mean?" I said: I hadn't heard of Krishnaswami until now.

"He's the bloke that saw it all. Took your number. Told the police."

"I see. I didn't know they had a witness."

"You bet they have. He's the star turn."

"Well, what about it?"

"He might be fixed," Turpin said, looking at me and putting a finger alongside his nose.

"But if he's given his evidence?"

"He could slip out of that easy enough. He's got pull, see? His dad's Trade Commissioner back home. A big bug. He could pull strings."

"Ah." I began to see daylight. Turpin and Krishnaswami were in cahoots, and Turpin was the pilot-fish. But I didn't let on I'd spotted their little game, and simply nodded to what he'd said.

"Suppose you talked to Krishnaswami, see? Just a friendly chat. It wouldn't hurt you."

"Where can I meet him?"

"He'll be here in a tick. He said he was coming at eight."

"All right."

"I'll get along then. If Krishnaswami comes in, shall I send him over?"

"Yes, do."

"Right you are."

He went out, and I guessed he'd gone to fetch Krishnaswami. Sure enough, in about five minutes, this bloke blew in, complete with white bum-freezer and smoking a cheroot. I'd often seen him about, without knowing who he was. He always seemed to have plenty of cash to sling about. He was a thickset chap with a little moustache and a brown spot on the white of his right eye. He looked sly, and he was, as things turned out.

"Excuse me," he said, "but am I addressing Mr. Adams?"

"You are."

"May I sit down?"

"Certainly."

He gave a little bow and sat down opposite me.

"What'll you have?" I said.

"A brandy, if I may."

He sat there smiling and looking smug until the boy brought his brandy. Then he said: "Mr. Adams," and stopped.

"Yes?" I said.

"It seems that my action in giving evidence last night has caused you much inconvenience," Krishnaswami said. "I should like to apologise for the trouble to which you have been put." He spread his hands and smiled. "Believe me, I am sincerely sorry."

"That's all right," I said.

"You are very kind. But perhaps if you would allow me to explain, you will understand the motives actuating my conduct. I feel sure you will understand."

"Carry on."

"Mr. Adams, I am an Indian! Those coolies whom your car injured are Indians also—my own people. I am an enlightened man, a democrat. I do not believe in the caste

system. It is barbarous and should be abolished. To me, all men are brothers. Those coolies are human beings like ourselves, are they not?"

"Oh absolutely," I said.

"Imagine, then, my feelings when on emerging from Fenner's, I saw these men struck down by your car and left bleeding and mangled in the roadway, while you yourself drove on without heed. Indians, Mr. Adams, my own people! Natives, it is true, but not animals, to be slaughtered like cattle. I knelt down beside them, I was bathed in their blood. One had sustained terrible injuries to his head, it seemed as though he might die there in my arms. You can understand my anger, Mr. Adams, and why, having noted the number of your car, I immediately denounced you to the police. Also, I must admit, I was at the time slightly intoxicated. Under the influence of liquor. It had gone to my head. Had I but reflected, I should not have taken the course which I did. But I acted on impulse. Upon the spur of the moment. Now I realize that I was wrong, that if you drove on it was from some other reason than callousness, and I am prepared, so far as I am able, to make amends. I cannot, alas, retract my statement to the police, but there are ways and means by which its effect may be softened." He pulled a handkerchief out of his sleeve and started to mop his forehead. He'd got very heated talking about the coolies. He drank some brandy and went on. "If for instance you were to offer some compensation to the family of the injured man——"

"Would that do any good?"

"In my opinion, yes. It would be a point in your favour when the case is brought to court."

"How much money should I offer?"

"Something in the nature of 500 rupees." He looked at me sideways out of the eye that had the brown spot in it. "If you were to give some such sum into my hands, I would see that it was distributed to the best advantage and in a manner which would redound to your credit."

"Oughtn't I to give it them myself?"

"No. I think perhaps it would come better through me—one of their own people, you know. I should of course make it quite clear that you were the donor, and that I was merely acting as intermediary."

"Well, I tell you what. I'll sleep on it and let you know. How's that?"

"Admirable. I am staying at the Laburnum, just round the corner. Here is my card. You can always get in touch with me there."

"Right."

"And with regard to my evidence, I think we might achieve some compromise. My father, as you are doubtless aware, is Trade Commissioner in England at the moment. He would gladly exert his influence on your behalf."

"Thanks."

"I am pleased to be of service," Krishnaswami said. "Will you join me in a drink?"

"No, I won't have another now, thanks."

"Just to show there is no ill-feeling."

"No really, thanks. Not now."

"As you wish," Krishnaswami said. "But I see you are a good sport, you do not bear malice. And perhaps you are wise not to drink too much. The police have an unworthy suspicion that you are a man of intemperate habits. Mr. Holt, the commissioner, is your enemy. Beware of his spies. You are being watched at this very moment!"

"How d'you know all this?"

Krishnaswami smiled, smoking his cheroot. "We natives have many systems of communication unknown to the European. Besides, news travels fast in the East. If you observe that table behind you, you will see that I am speaking the truth."

I looked behind me. There was an awful crowd of Mohammedan sods sitting at that table: they looked more like cutthroats than detectives, but they were watching me right enough.

"Agents of Mr. Holt," Krishnaswami said. He got up from the table and bowed. "Till our next meeting, Mr. Adams."

"So long," I said, and watched him walk out, strutting, with the cheerot cocked up at a jaunty angle in his mouth. I looked at the card he'd given me. H. B. KRISHNASWAMI, it said, BACHELOR OF ARTS, OXON, and written underneath, "Laburnum Hotel, Chandrapore." I took another look at those Mohammedans. Detectives be damned. More likely some of Krishnaswami's pals, keeping an eye on me. It'd take more than them to stop me drinking. "Boy!" I called, "Bring another whisky. A large one."

Soon after this Shankran rolled in, all smiles as usual.

"Well, well, well! How's it going?"

"Not too good," I told him.

"Now, now, don't get downhearted. Never say die, you know. This case isn't as bad as it seems, I've been making enquiries. It appears the police have a witness. A man named Krishnaswami."

"I know. I've just been talking to him."

"What!"

I told him what Krishnaswami had said to me. Shankran listened, holding a cigarette with his hand cupped round it, sucking up smoke from time to time. "Yes. Yes. Yes," he said, and when I'd finished: "It's as you thought. This Krishnaswami is a crook. I have him taped, I've been on his track for some time. That's why I was pleased when I came in just now. If Krishnaswami appears in court I shall unmask him as an impostor. His evidence will be discredited."

"But isn't he the son of Sir Somebody Krishnaswami then?"

"No, no. That's all bunk. Absolute nonsense. He's an impostor."

"He said I was being watched by detectives. At the table behind."

"What? Those ruffians? Bunk, my boy, bunk. Krishnaswami's after your cash."

"That's what I thought."

"You were right. But don't worry, we can circumvent him. He doesn't present a serious obstacle. No. The main thing is that coolie. If he dies, Holt will make it hot for you."

"He put me under arrest this morning."

"I know, I know. And Major Brant bailed you out."

"News travels fast in the East," I said.

Shankran said: "I got it from the inspector. He and I are good friends. He will keep me posted with all details and developments as to police-work." Suddenly he looked very serious. "But if that coolie dies. . . ." He shook his head.

"What about the other one?" I asked.

"Oh he's all right. A broken leg, that's all. We needn't worry about him." Shankran tapped on the table. "And listen, on no account give Krishnaswami any money. Stall him, you understand. Procrastinate. But give him nothing. Take no one's advice but mine."

"Sir Alec has called in Dr. Menon, for the company."

"Menon? I know him. One of these kid-glove lawyers. No pep. Not the man for this case. Pay no attention to him."

"All right."

"I'll deal with Krishnaswami. For the rest, pray to God that coolie doesn't die. Pray to God. I will pray for you myself tonight." He was very serious.

"Holy smoke!" I said.

"Boy, bring some gin!" Shankran said.

There were two mosquitoes had got in my net that night, and I couldn't sleep. Every time I dozed off, one of the bastards'd come singing round and stung me, and at last I had to get up and swat them. Even so I couldn't sleep for thinking of that coolie. It was bloody hot and I was sweating and I thought, suppose he does die? I didn't want to get three years like Cornford. I don't mind telling you I did pray that night, I was in an awful state. At last I managed to sleep, and woke late in the morning feeling lousy. I fined the blasted boy an anna for each of those

mosquitoes and got off to the office. I hadn't been there long before the Old Man sent for me. I went up and he had Dr. Menon with him, who looked serious.

"About this accident of yours, Adams," Sir Alec said. "Did you know the police have a witness?"

"Yes, sir," I said. "I've spoken to him."

"Is it true he is the son of the Trade Commissioner in England?" Dr. Menon said.

"He told me he was."

Menon nodded. I could see he was impressed.

"What did he speak to you about?" Sir Alec said.

"He suggested that I should offer compensation to the injured man's family, sir."

"Humph! How much?"

"Five hundred chips."

"Humph. What d'you think, Menon?"

"It wouldn't do any harm to parley with them, sir," Menon said. "Have you got his address, Mr. Adams?"

"Yes. Here's his card."

"Well, we might go round there and see him this evening, eh?" He looked at Sir Alec, who grunted "Good idea," so I agreed.

That evening Menon and I went round to Krishnaswami's hotel, back of Mount Road. He was in right enough, very smooth and pleased to see us. It was a bloody sight to see those two, Menon and him, both talking Oxford-English and trying to outdo each other at it. By God, you should have heard them. Krishnaswami let off a little bit about his father and I could see Menon believed him. He swallowed it whole. At last, after a lot of this, we got down to brass tacks. Krishnaswami still stuck out for 500 chips and Menon seemed to think it'd be a good thing if I shelled out.

"But look here," I said. "The police are prosecuting me, not this fellow's family at all. How will it help to give them five hundred?"

"It would make a good impression on the court," Menon said.

"But in any case the sum seems a bit stiff," I said, and so it was. Why, what the hell, 500 chips was pretty near a whole month's screw.

"Oh come, Mr. Adams," Krishnaswami said. "When I think of that poor coolie, with his blood and brains bespattering the roadway, when I think of his poor family, of the terrible worry and uncertainty which they must be undergoing, I sometimes wonder whether any sum of money, however large, could be adjudged sufficient compensation."

"Well anyhow," I said, "he's not dead yet, because I phoned up the hospital this afternoon and they say he's getting along nicely."

I'd been keeping this up my sleeve as a trump card, and I could see it was a set-back for Krishnaswami: he didn't like it at all. Then Menon came in with another one.

"Well," he said, "we will consider your proposal, Mr. Krishnaswami. I personally am in favour of it. If Mr. Adams will appoint some responsible person to distribute this sum among the man's family, I have no doubt that such an action would influence the court favourably."

Krishnaswami didn't like that either. He'd counted on getting hold of the dough himself. He bowed and showed his teeth, but it wasn't a smile. He said: "Perhaps Mr. Adams would prefer to consult his *other lawyer*, Mr. Shankran, before committing himself to any course?"

"Mr. Shankran?" Menon said. He frowned.

"I think I am correct, Mr. Adams, am I not?" Krishnaswami said. "Mr. Shankran is acting for you also?"

"Yes," I said.

I wondered for a moment how the hell he knew, and then I remembered those Mohammedans.

"News travels fast in the East," I said.

Krishnaswami smiled and bowed. He knew I'd caught on, but he didn't care. He saw the game was up. Menon was still frowning. He didn't say anything more about Shankran, but he was upset all the same. Going downstairs,

I tried to explain to him how it was, but he turned away and said: "It is most unprofessional having two solicitors. You should have informed me before now."

In the car he'd evidently thought up something, because he said: "I wonder if it would be possible to see Mr. Shankran this evening. Since this state of affairs has been allowed to transpire, perhaps it can be turned to advantage. Mr. Shankran and I should compare notes as soon as possible."

"We can see if he's in," I said.

He was. We found him sitting at a table covered with briefs, busy on a big case, he told us.

"Dr. Menon and I have just seen Krishnaswami," I said.

"Oh yes? What happened?"

Menon, still upstage and on his dignity, said: "Apparently Mr. Adams consulted you first, before Sir Alec called me in. I think therefore that we should pool our knowledge and work together as far as possible from now on."

"Yes, yes. Quite. A pleasure, Dr. Menon. What did Krishnaswami say?"

Menon told him.

"Are you satisfied that this man has no ulterior motive in suggesting compensation?" Shankran said.

"For my part, I am perfectly satisfied," Menon said. They argued about it for some time, but Shankran wouldn't agree: he still didn't like the idea. At last Menon got up to go. He'd said goodbye and was at the door, when he turned round again as if he'd remembered something.

"Oh yes. One moment, Mr. Shankran." He turned to me. "I am sure you will excuse us, Mr. Adams. Just a technical point."

"Sure," I said, "don't mind me," so they went out on the verandah together while I mixed myself another whisky and soda and as I was drinking it I could hear them out there talking away in Tamil. Presently they came back, both smiling, and Menon seemed in a better temper.

"That's settled then," he said. "If you should decide in favour of compensation, will you let me know, Mr.

Shankran?" and Shankran said he would, and Menon went out. He didn't shake hands with me, just said "Goodbye," and I think he was still a bit put-out. Directly he'd gone, Shankran stopped smiling and turned round on me.

"The dirty bainchut," he said. "D'you know what he told me outside?"

"I've no idea."

"Don't worry, Shankran," he said, "Get as much out of him as you can. I'm paid by the company, I won't ask you for a cut.' You see? The corrupt bainchut. They're all the same out here: squeeze you for your last anna. By God, Adams, you can thank your stars I'm straight!" He tapped on the table again. "As for Krishnaswami, if he comes near that court I'll smash him. But he won't, depend upon it. Those five hundred rupees, he wants them for his hotel-bill. It's the amount he owes the proprietor!"

"What!" I said. "How do you know?"

"I found it out," Shankran said. "It's my business to find out things. Krishnaswami's up to his nose in debt. He's a twister!"

He took off his glasses and wiped them. He was so furious he started sweating hard, and the sweat ran down his nose on to his glasses so that he couldn't see. He wiped the glasses and said: "However, he won't appear in court. He knows I'm after him!"

"You don't think Menon's working with Krishnaswami, do you?" I said.

"Menon? Oh no. He's a twister too, but not that kind. Hasn't got the guts."

"You don't think so?"

"I'm sure of it, my boy, sure of it. No. You needn't worry about that. As for the case, it'll go off all right if that coolie recovers."

"He's doing well so far. I'm going up to see him at the hospital tomorrow."

"That's fine," Shankran said. "But remember, don't give him any money. I'll tell you when the time comes to pay out."

"Righto," I said.

I got up to the hospital next day and there was this coolie with his head and face bound up in bandages and all his family weeping and wailing round the bedside. The other coolie who had a broken leg was there too, but he didn't seem to have any family, or at least I didn't see them anyway.

The mother of the broken-headed coolie came across and spoke to me. Of course it was all in Tamil and I couldn't understand the half of it, but I told her in English how sorry I was, and I think she understood, because she made a salaam and pointed to her boy and said a piece more, weeping all the time. I felt awful. The old woman didn't sound angry, only very sad, but she couldn't stop crying. I bloody near wept myself, I don't mind telling you. I spoke to the coolie, but he didn't answer: he was lying back with his eyes closed where you could see them through the bandages, and he looked pretty bad to me. I felt terrible. I spoke to the other coolie and he grinned up at me and seemed quite cheerful, so I said a bit more to the old mother, who salaamed again, still sobbing, and the rest of the family crowded round all chattering and some of them salaamed too. They could tell I was sorry. Then I got out and told the matron to give the coolies anything extra they wanted and charge it up to me.

"That's very good of you, Mr. Adams," she said, "but I think they are quite comfortable. They have all they want."

"The one with the broken head looks bad. Will he live?"

"Certainly. He's quite out of danger now," she said, so I thanked her and went out. Driving back to the bungalow I still felt awful about it, though.

A week went by and I heard nothing more, except I had a summons from the police saying I was to appear on various charges in three days time. Then one morning Sir Alec sent for me.

"Adams," he said, "Dr. Menon was here yesterday. He

says he wants to give up the case as you already have a solicitor acting for you. Is that so?"

"Yes, sir," I said.

"Who is he? A good man?"

"Yes, sir. Mr. Shankran."

"Humph! I've heard of him. Sails a bit near the wind sometimes, doesn't he?"

"He's a smart lawyer, sir."

"Humph. Didn't he act for Cornford?"

"Yes, sir."

"Think he'll get you off?"

"He seems pretty certain of it."

"I'm glad of that. Sure you don't need Menon then?"

"No, sir."

"Very well," Sir Alec said, "if you're satisfied."

I couldn't find Shankran anywhere. He'd gone off on a case and nobody seemed to know where he was. I was due to appear next day and didn't know what the hell to do. I sat in Fenner's sopping up straight Scotch and feeling awful. Then suddenly, towards the end of the evening, Shankran came in. By God I was never so glad to see any one in my life.

"Hullo, hullo, hullo," he said. "How are you? I've just come back from Rodpore. Been chasing a witness. Boy, bring some gin!"

"Listen," I said. "My case comes off tomorrow at twelve. Have you got everything fixed?"

"Tomorrow? I can't appear for you tomorrow. I'm up to my eyes. Rape. A very difficult case. I've bribed the chief witness but there are still two I've got to get at. Tomorrow's impossible. I shan't be here."

"Well, what the hell's going to happen?"

"Don't worry. You won't appear either."

"But I've had the summons!"

Shankran shook his head. "You won't appear. You're ill. You can't appear if you're ill."

"What d'you mean—ill?"

"You're sick. You've got dysentery."

"I haven't at all."

"Of course you have. Don't be silly. We'll get the case postponed. Meet me tomorrow morning and I'll fix it for you."

So I met him next morning and he drove me right down to James Town, through the bazaar and a lot of stinking little streets and stopped at a chemist's shop that had posters up on the walls outside, advertising cures for everything, including the plague.

"Up here," Shankran said, so we went up some awful filthy stairs and into a doctor's waiting-room full of natives covered in sores. Shankran sent in his card and the doctor saw us straightaway. He was a Hindu with a big black beard.

"Ah yes. Mr. Adams. How do you do? Dysentery, isn't it? I'll make the certificate out at once."

He sat down and wrote a certificate saying I was suffering from dysentery and we thanked him and went.

"That's settled," Shankran said. "Drop me at the court as we go by, I'll just file the certificate. Don't be alarmed if you don't hear from me for a while, I've got to get after those witnesses. Curse the corrupt bainchuts. Baksheesh, that's all they think about in this country."

Fenner said to me one night: "Seen Krishnaswami lately?"

"No," I said.

"Well you won't, either. He's shot the moon. Blown off to Bangalore."

"By God. Is that so?"

"It bloody well is. He owes that fellow at the Laburnum 500 chips."

"By God. Does he owe you anything?"

"No. But that little blighter Turpin does, and he's gone too. They've done a bunk together."

"By God," I said. "Have another drink?"

Well at last the case came off. I met Shankran the night before and he gave me a whacking long list of answers I had to make in court.

"Better memorise those," he said. "Learn them off by heart. You won't have much trouble, I know the magistrate. He's a gentleman. You won't have to go in the box. As for witnesses, Krishnaswami's gone. He got out when I threatened him with exposure. The night-watchman from Spinner's saw the smash, but I've fixed him all right. Major Brant will of course speak for you. The inspector's on our side as well. You'll have to give him three hundred chips by the way, when it's all over."

"D'you think we'll win?"

"Of course we shall. Without Krishnaswami they've got no case at all. It'll be a walk-over."

The court was very hot and crowded, with bags of natives sprawling about the corridors, all chattering to beat the band, gobbing and chewing betel-nut, and peons with red sashes and great brass plates on their chests strutting up and down bawling for silence and making more row than all the rest put together.

Inside, some native police were keeping order and it looked pretty much like the American courts on the cinema, with benches all the way down and a high dais for the magistrate to sit at. I saw old Brant and several of the boys, but no sign of Krishnaswami. Holt wasn't there, of course, being commissioner, but all the coolie's family were, and soon after an ambulance rolled up and the coolies themselves were carried in on stretchers.

"Have you got the answers off pat?" Shankran asked me.

"Yes," I said.

Then the magistrate came in and we all stood up. He was a Mohammedan and Shankran knew him well. He rapped with the gavel and we all sat down again. Mine was the first case called. The inspector gave his evidence first, for the prosecution, then Shankran called Major Brant, for the defence.

After he had spoken, Krishnaswami's name was called. No answer. The usher walked up and down shouting "Mr. Krishnaswami!" but Krishnaswami didn't show up. The inspector was called back to the box. He read out the statement made by Krishnaswami, to the effect that I had caused the accident and furthermore had callously driven on, being at the time under the influence of drink.

Shankran jumped up. He was sweating hard. He wiped his glasses and the back of his neck and shouted: "Do you deny that this witness was himself intoxicated at the time of giving his evidence, and that moreover one of his companions was in such an unseemly condition that you refused to accept his statement?"

The inspector didn't deny it.

"Therefore the case for the prosecution rests solely upon the evidence of two men who were themselves in a state of intoxication, and who have since left the city?" Shankran said. "Thank you, that is all." He sat down again.

"You say these witnesses cannot be found?" the magistrate said.

"No, your worship," the inspector said. "Their present whereabouts are unknown."

"H'm. Does the defendant plead guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty, your worship," Shankran said, "on the charge of causing the accident; not guilty on the charge of intoxication."

"Will the defendant please approach?"

Shankran nudged me, and I went forward and stood in front of the dais.

"You plead guilty to the charges against you?"

"Except to that of intoxication, your worship," I said.

"What caused your car to collide with these men?"

"A pariah dog, your worship. It ran out in the road, and in my efforts to avoid it, caused the accident."

"Why did you drive on, instead of stopping to assist the men you had injured?"

"I lost my nerve, your worship."

"Why didn't you report to the police?"

"Same reason, your worship."

"H'm. Well, in the absence of further witnesses, the case will have to be adjourned in order that the question of compensation be discussed among the parties concerned.

Shankran jumped up again, wiping his glasses like mad.

"Your worship," he said. "Cannot the question of compensation be discussed without delay? My client has suffered considerable inconvenience as a result of this case and we would sooner proceed to its conclusion without further postponement."

"Very well," the magistrate said. He looked over at the coolies. The one with the broken leg had it done up in plaster of Paris and the other one had some of the bandages taken off his face and looked a bit better.

"Let us say then," the magistrate stroked his chin, "The sum of three hundred and fifty rupees." He repeated it in Tamil and looked again at the coolies and at the old mother who was sitting with the family on the front bench. She nodded and started to cry again and the rest of the family began to argue and talk in Tamil. The magistrate rapped for order and said: "You are also fined one hundred and fifty rupees for driving an automobile to the common danger and fifty rupees for failing to report an accident to the police. These sums should be paid to the clerk of the court. Case dismissed," so it cost me 850 chips altogether, including three hundred for the inspector, and on top of that came Shankran's fee. By God, it was worth it though. I went on the binge for a bloody month afterwards, I was so relieved at getting off. In fact that's what got me the sack eventually, not the accident at all. Sir Alec was damn decent about it on the whole, he said he couldn't keep me in the circumstances, but gave me a damned good reference just the same. That's how I come to be home again. Don't know of any good jobs going, do you?

SELECTED NOTICES

The Eighteenth Century Background, by Basil Willey. Chatto. 15s.

If the number of times it is mentioned in contemporary footnotes is any guide, Basil Willey's *The Seventeenth Century Background* is already a standard work on the subject. His new survey of the following century is a welcome sequel and should be as highly valued. The Victorians and the Elizabethans still await Mr. Willey's attention, and I hope he will tackle them without delay; they are indeed necessary for the completion of his picture of post-Reformation thought, which loses some of its unity by a necessarily arbitrary division into centuries.

The Eighteenth Century Background has as its sub-title, 'Studies on the Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period'. 'Nature' is one of those pantechnecon concepts which accommodate the most diverse elements and which provide us with virtually unlimited opportunities for saying the same thing without revealing our differences of meaning. It is indeed a cult word, a word with an elaborate *mystique*, which almost all thinkers try to annex for the sake of its prestige. Christian and atheist agree in this, if in nothing else, that what is *contra naturam* is therefore bad. Perhaps no century more than the eighteenth has so ardently exalted Nature and striven to give it precise definition, and perhaps no century has produced such numerous and irreconcilable expositions of the same concept. The exploratory splitting-up of 'Nature' into natural religion, rationalism, natural and perfectible man, a vague theism and an even vaguer pantheism, produced what we are apt to think of as characteristically nineteenth-century thought, and still dominates our own intellectual climate.

'Nature' became dynamite when the Christian synthesis broke up. To reject the doctrine of Original Sin and the idea of Divine Revelation is to become uncertain both about Man's nature (his essential quiddity) and his place in Nature

(the evident Cosmos). Fortunately the 'vegetable universe'—in Blake's phrase—presents itself as the *magnum opus* of a supernatural architect, and thus breaks the fall on a cushion of theism. God is still on the map, even if He has been bypassed. But the student of Nature (in all its ambiguities of meaning) makes other discoveries: that it is subject to deterministic conditions and to entropy, and that it offsets this by an inherent principle of constant self-maintenance. The first analogy suggests that Man is 'caused' by environment and circumstance, the second suggests that he is informed with a principle of 'natural' goodness. This innate perfectibility would show an inevitable upwards graph if men were not hampered by the artificial (i.e. 'unnatural') conventions of society; and here the right use of Reason enters to remove the obstacles which block the progress of emancipation. In the sphere of Nature, vernal and visible, there is the same progress towards the untrammelled essence. The ruined priory of Shenstone's *ferme ornée* marks the first stage, when Kames awarded Horticulture a full-blue among the Arts; but a stricter primitivism required virginity in Nature—the beauty of an 'unspoiled' countryside, the nobility of original and spontaneous Man, the eloquent promises potential in the basic 'nature' of mankind. The French Revolution and the Romantic Movement (epitomised in Mr. Willey's account by Godwin and Wordsworth) came as the consequences of eighteenth-century speculation, seeking to restore the virgin condition of pre-Adamic Man and to fulfil his promises. As a philosophical tradition it suffers from that intellectual equivalent of entropy, which ravages all Thought that fails to reduce its epistemology to a viable dogma about the nature of Man. The wreckage of it still dominates Europe, and we are the heirs to its disorder. Mr. Willey need make no apology for summarising such a subject in a time of war, for it is most intimately relevant. Hume, Hartley, Priestley and their colleagues merit our attention, and Mr. Willey has made them accessible in a lucid and compact framework. I wish he had not kept himself so modestly off-stage, since his rare comments are acute,

and I wish he had shown the relation of Philosophy to Literature: the connection between Shaftesbury and Richardson is worth noting, so, likewise, are the researches of Shenstone and Bishop Percy, and the full treatment of Wordsworth enhances one's surprise at the entire omission of Blake. These things aside, Mr. Willey has provided a comprehensive and most admirable survey.

DESMOND HAWKINS

Jail Journey, by Jim Phelan. Secker & Warburg, 12/6. In a book that is always lively and readable, the thing that stands out as truly important is Mr. Phelan's straightforward discussion of the sex life of prisons. The existing penal system simply ignores the fact that man is a sexual animal. In Mr. Phelan's book, and especially in Chapters XIV-XVI, you can study the results of this, and they make horrible reading, but genuinely horrible, and not just pornography in disguise.

The essential fact about a prison is that it is a place where you are cut off from the opposite sex. As Mr. Phelan points out, it is not enough to say that this is part of the punishment; it *is* the punishment. And sex-deprivation does not simply mean the cutting-off of a luxury, like tobacco, but the starvation of a powerful instinct which will take its revenge in one way or another. It is perfectly well known to anyone with even a third-hand acquaintance with prisons that nearly all prisoners are chronic masturbators. In addition there is homosexuality, which is almost general in long-term jails. If Macartney's *Walls Have Mouths* is to be believed, some prisons are such hotbeds of vice that even the warders are infected. Mr. Phelan's revelations are less lurid, but they are certainly bad enough. Over sixty unnatural forms of the sexual act, he says, are now practised in Dartmoor and Parkhurst. The thing is taken for granted and joked about by prisoners, warders and everyone else connected with a prison, at the same time as it cannot even be

hinted at in any public discussion of the subject. All modern civilized societies rest ultimately on the jail and the concentration camp, and the central fact about jails and concentration camps is something unmentionable. The question Mr. Phelan asks is whether 'they', the respectable people, the clergymen, scoutmasters and maiden ladies who believe that prison is 'good for you', know just what imprisonment means. He concludes that they do know, and when he was serving his own sentence he was even tempted to believe that they rather enjoy the knowledge. He records (very interesting if true) that the majority of women go in for some or other form of exhibitionism when they pass a file of convicts on the road. Even prison-reformers are almost always shocked by the suggestion that convicts should be allowed a normal sexual life. (The formula is: 'Oh, but that's impossible!') They cry out against leg-irons and bread-and-water, but they are willing to tolerate sodomy. And in fact it has got to be tolerated so long as prisons exist.

Mr. Phelan was 'in' for killing somebody (he served thirteen years of a life-sentence and was then released), and even a wilful murderer is not in the ordinary sense a criminal. This no doubt accounts for the detached, good-tempered attitude that Mr. Phelan is able to take. The whining note which is so common in prison literature is completely absent from his book. On the whole he is recording rather than commenting, and though the record is more damning than any diatribe, he makes few positive suggestions. He seems content to point out that our present methods of dealing with criminals are worse than useless, and to leave it at that. In prison he kept up a ceaseless, conscious struggle to keep his mind intact, to avoid slipping back into the neuroses and the downright lunacy which he saw all round him. He spent years planning escape (a most ingenious escape, which, however, finally had to be abandoned), studied chess and foreign languages, made himself into a skilled blacksmith and a first-rate gardener, and wrote enormously on pilfered sheets of paper. (He doesn't say how he smuggled his writings out of jail. That could be 'telling',

of course, but the tip might come in useful one of these days.) The information that he gives about prison slang and about the various rackets and unofficial recreations is most interesting. This is the book of an individualist, with a streak of rather childish vanity; but a more modest man would never have remained sane enough to write it.

GEORGE ORWELL

Between the Lines, Or How To Read a Newspaper by Denis Thompson. Frederick Muller 3/6. Good tonic for those who still believe what they read in the newspapers. Are the newspapers in a democratic country propagandist? Mr. Thompson shows how all the capitalist newspapers of whatever political party arrange facts to support the *status quo*, and how recently in England they have become almost as subservient to Government views as those in the totalitarian states. He exposes the influence of advertisers on opinions and news, and finally he attacks the press for its neglect of news in favour of sport, fashion and other features. Mr. Thompson ingeniously pretends to be impartial, but a shrewd reader will rank him amongst the orthodox intellectual left, with pacifist leanings. On pp. 91 and 92, he states what is really the case for pacifism, pointing out that democracy, when defended, becomes totalitarian. He does not say what happens when it goes undefended. His book sometimes lacks humour. It is wrong to assume that the readers of *The Times* think that a discussion on the middle page of changes in the rules of a card game is more important than news on other pages. Probably a paper edited by Mr. Thompson would have much news, no sport, no "stories", and very few readers.



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